MACHINE GUN BATTALION
THE JAT REGIMENT

IX

JAT REGIMENT

M.G. BATTALION

A SHORT HISTORY

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A BRIEF HISTORY

OF THE

MACHINE GUN BATTALION

THE JAT REGT.

—

1941—1946

Complied by Lt.-Col. E. JOHNSON.

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COMPILER'S NOTES

This brief history is not intended as an Official record of actions either by the M. G. Bn. or of any other Formations and Units mentioned.

It is intended purely as a personal record for officers of the Bn., a number of whom will have returned to Civil life, and the others split up in other Bns.

It is hoped that this little work will achieve its object, and although the Bn., no longer exists, help in the course of time to keep fresh in the memory of all officers the good and bad times they all shared, and the magnificient body of men—Jats—M. Rs. and P. Ms. who shared it with them.

I must thank particularly Major Francis and Major Davis for their great assistance in compiling Part I of this History.

E. JOHNSON.

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CHAPTER—I.

The Raising of the Bn.

It was decided by G.H.Q. (I), in early 1941, that in order to come into line with the British Army at home, Machine Gun battalions should be raised in the Indian Army, to take the place of the M.M.G. Support Platoon, which had hitherto been a component part of every infantry battalion.

Accordingly orders were given for the formation of the first three M.G.Bns., and the regiments chosen, were the 6th Rajputana Rifles, the 9th Jats, and the 17th Dogras.

Lt.-Col. B.R. Godley, who was selected to raise the M. G. Bn. of the 9th Jats arrived back in Bareilly where it was decided the new Bn. should be formed, on Nov. 41 from the Middle East, and at once set about the preliminary organisation.

The nucleus of the battalion was to consist of officers and men from Infantry Bns. of the Jat Group, preferably machine gun trained, and these began to arrive in the later months of 1941.

Although the official date for the raising of the Bn. was 15th Aug. 41, proper training on the basis of organised programmes could not begin before December, owing to the necessity of sending officers and N.C.Os. to do M.M.G. courses at Saugor, and the battalion was not really up to strength in personnel until January 1942. The great majority of the men, about 80%, were comprised of newly trained recruits straight from the training battalion who had just completed their 6 months training, and after the attestation ceremony were marched across the road as sepoys to join the M.G.Bn. These sepoys were mostly hand picked by Colonel Godley himself from the drafts of men, awaiting posting on completion of their training at the T.B., and we were very lucky to get such an excellent lot of new recruits, who have formed the basis of the Bn. throughout its existence.

The normal caste composition in the Jat Regt. was adopted for the M.G.Bn., A Coy. had Musalman Rajputs, B and D Jats and C Company Punjabi Musalmans. The Bn. was fortunate to receive from the 4th Bn. Subedar Major Mahboob Khan as S.M. This V.C.O. has had over 31 years service, served during the Great War and since he has been with us has been awarded the O.B.I.

1st and 2 Class, with the title of Sardar Bahadur and has recently been promoted to Hony Lt.

The battalion was first housed in hutments adjoining the eastern side of the 10/9th Jat Regt, but as this was earmarked for an M.T. Training Centre and was unsuitable for training, its location was moved to the Northern edge of the Bareilly Maidan in November, where tents were pitched, and here it remained until it mobilized. Although this area had little shade and protection from the sun, it did have the advantage of affording good open spaces for training areas, and was well separate from other units.

Training then began in real earnest. It was indeed a difficult task that Colonel Godley had been set. In the days of peace it was considered that to train a machine gunner, at least a year was necessary before he could be considered efficient; we had to produce forty eight gun teams from new recruits in at the most 8 months, by which time the new battalion had to be ready for active operations. Specialists too, such as rangetakers, signallers and scouts had to be trained, a difficult problem for to teach men how to read complicated scales, and handle dials and switchboards, when less than a year previously they had been ploughing in the fields in their own villages, possibly unable to write their own name required tremendous efforts. It was not only the sepoys who had to be trained, the greater part of the officers were E.C.Os. and new to the Indian Army, with only a slight knowledge of Urdu and of Indian troops, and who mostly had never seen a Vickers machine gun before. As only a few vacancies for officers on the M.M.G. course were received, the majority including 2 coy comds had to learn what they could themselves inside the battalion. It was a familiar sight to see officers vigorously attempting gun drills on the maidan, under the guidance of B.H.M. Des Ram, in efforts to master the essentials of M.G. Training. Further more as it was the intention to make M.G. Bns. completely mobile very many M.T. drivers had to be trained, and as there were at the time no military trucks available, large numbers of civilian vehicles had to be hired. Early driving practice took place on the old polo ground and airstrip, and day after day an interminable circle used to proceed round and round consisting of the most assorted collection imaginable of derelict

bazaar "garries", condemned buses and cars, with anxious pupils gripping their steering wheels and even more anxious instructors seated beside them.

Later this stream was joined by motorbicycles, for about 20 had been allotted to the Bn. Besides the future M/C D.Rs. many enthusiasts of varying skill decided to master the art of riding them. All officers put in plenty of practice, and the maidan to say nothing of the main road leading to the Mess became a veritable Brooklands. Even the Subedar Major was tempted to learn, and justified his name of "Bahadur Sahib" by riding at speeds quite inconsistent with the amount of practice he had received and his age.

At long last our Service vehicles became available and it was a well remembered day, when Capt. Stevens the M.T.O. arrived in Bareilly after driving from Delhi with our brand new drivers each with a Ford "Snub nosed" 15 cwt. truck in a convoy of about 100 vehicles strangely enough without any casualties "en route." These trucks later proved most unsuitable in the Arakan, as their piston rings, for which replacements were never available soon went faulty and the engines lost all their power. The Dodge 15 cwt. and Jeeps with which the Bn. was later equipped have proved a 100% improvement.

By the end of February individual training was completed, and Platoon training was started. This period had been of the most intense and hard working nature for all ranks. The men scarcely had time for a moments rest throughout their working day, so taken up as it was with P.T., Drills, M.G. parades, School periods for education, night operations, field firing and even more M.G. training.

So good were rations, at this time that with the fresh meat and vegetables and milk from the local military dairy, men developed out of all recognition, and those who had been rather undersized on being recruited soon broadened into sturdy sepoys. Officers too will not quickly forget this time. The administration of a battalion, which is in the process of being raised, in an area where the peace time system of accounting for every round of ammunition and gallon of petrol consumed still exists is a large job

in itself, but outside this were parades to be supervised, programmes to be organised, daily conferences and a constant round of duties, Sundays being used for reconnaissances of new areas and TEWTS Christmas day 1941 will be remembered by many jawans, as their first introduction to the luxuries of Western civilisation, as the whole Bn. was marched into Bareilly City where it was shown an Indian film in a cinema, which had been hired for the occasion.

It was with the greatest regret that on Feb. 20th the battalion bade farewell to Col. Godley, who had just received orders to take over command of the lst (Royal) Bn., then involved in the withdrawal from Burma. It was his fine example of leadership, and determination to obtain the highest level of efficiency, from every man under his command, with his tireless determination to make the M.G.Bn. into a first class fighting unit, which inspired the keeness and enthusiasm of all his subordinates, and both he and Mrs. Godley will always be remembered with respect and gratitude by all who served under him.

On the departure of Col. Godley, Major R.H. Lowe the 2 i/c took over temporary command of the battalion until the new C.O. Lt.-Col. W. R. Thomson M.C. arrived. Col. Thomson, remained C.O. for only 6 months, when he was transferred to take over a battalion of 5th Mahratta L.I. Later we heard with deep regret that he died of wounds received in action in Italy.

Meanwhile during Feb. and March Companies went off in turn to camp areas where field firing was carried out. These areas, some of which were near to Bareilly such as Chaubari and Faridpur and some further a field as Chuehait and Budaon, provided excellent opportunities to company commanders not only to increase the efficiency of their gun teams, but also, as this was the first occassion on which they had their companies to themselves to get to know their men individually. All company M.T. was naturally taken out, at that time each coy had 23 15 cwt. trucks 3 three tonners and a water cart, and while the machine gunners were firing over the field firing area, drivers were practised across country. Although accidents were few, the bogging of vehicles in sand, petrol stoppages and attendant evils, were a

constant source of headaches to company commanders of whom only one, Capt Skinner, had any pretensions to mechanical knowledge.

On March 12th the C.O. decided to take the entire Bn. in M.T. up to Delhi to practise field firing on the large range South of the city. This was an ambitious undertaking, as we possessed well over 120 vehicles. However this large convoy after two halts for the night arrived at its destination with, surprisingly enough, no accidents to record, even though at one time the 2 i/c leading the convoy, who was in wireless communication with Capt. T. W. King at the tail found there was nearly 14 miles separating them. The field firing was quite successful and after three days the C.O. decided he himself would lead the battalion back through the heart of New Delhi, to give the sepoys a chance of seeing it. Unfortunately the Pace he set was rather too brisk at the start and although the leading 30 trucks or so were able to keep their place comfortably, this was not the case further back, and early risers in India's capital were surprised to see the unusual spectacle of trucks full of sepoys careering down Kingsway at speeds approaching 60 m.p.h., determined not to lose their places in the convoy.

By April 4th training was considered completed and every officer and other rank had been allotted to his particular job, whether it be commanding a section, member of a gun team, scout, rangetaker driver, signaller, or storeman. In fact the M.G.Bn. 9th Jat Regt. had been formed into a corporate unit, and was ready and keen to serve wherever it would be required. During the month of April the entire Bn., with the exception of a skeleton staff proceeded on leave, and mobilisation orders were received soon after its return. The time of departure was obviously close at hand.

Orders were finally received that the battalion less its M.T. would move by train from Bareilly on June 12 to Comilla in Eastern Bengal. A certain disappointment was felt on hearing the news, as everyone had hoped that the middle East would be our destination, considering the battalion was entirely mobile and suited for desert warfare. However all ranks realised that subsequent to the withdrawal of Gen. Alexanders army from Burma, India's eastern frontier was directly threatened, and the

prospect of seeing early action was in no way diminished by going east, and not west. The battalion's transport was to proceed by road at a later date, and 2/Lt. Banks the M.T.O. and a small rear party were left behind, to join up later on with the M.T.

On the night of June 12th the Battalion marched down to Bareilly station and entrained. Many officers and men from the Training Battalion were there, together with the pipe band and we were given a great "send off." The walls of the station echoed and re-echoed with the cheering warcries of the men, almost drowning the strains of the band and the shouted farewells of those who had come to wish the M.G. Bn. goodbye. As the train slowly gathered speed there must have been many wondering what the future would hold in store, and what would be the end of the journey on which this body of men so recently joined together into one unit, were now embarking.

CHAPTER—II.

Bengal and Arakan.

The Bn. on arrival at Comilla in Eastern Bengal in June 1942 joined 14 Ind. Div. and was allotted temporary accommodation in Mynamati Camp. It was the time immediately following the retreat from Burma of Gen. Alexander's Army and this division was the only one at the time between the Japanese Forces and Calcutta. Speculation was naturally rife among all ranks as to what the immediate role of the Bn. would be, and all were wondering whether we should be immediately plunged into action. This was not to be the case however and as will be seen many weary months elapsed before any of our machine guns were called upon to fire at the enemy.

Meanwhile orders came for Companies to go out on detachment and moves accordingly took place. A Company went to LAKSHAM under command of the 1/17 Dogras, B Company to FAZILPUR with the 5/8 Punjab Regt. and the 1/7 Rajputs, and C Company to Feni under the 2/1 Punjab Regt., all these last 3 Bns. forming 47 Bde. whose H.Q. was at Feni. D Company and Bn. H.Q. were kept at COMILLA with Div. H.Q.

14 Div. commanded by Maj. Gen. Lloyd consisted at this

NAMES OF OFFICERS FROM LEFT TO RIGHT

Back Row:— Lt. E. B. S. Creasy, Capt. Karr, Lt. Didar Singh, Lt. C. R. Singh, Lt. L. B. Howick, Lt. Khema Ram.

Middle Row:—Capt. P. W. Dron, Lt. P. K. Noble, Major P. W. Francis, Major B. M. Davies, Major A. D. C. Eales. Capt. B. M. Bali.

Front Row:— Major D. W. Squier, Sub.-Major & Hony. Lieut. Mahbub Khan, Lt.-Col. Johnson, Major R. D. Howse, Major B. J. A. Thompson.

time of little more than 2 Brigades, and had been ordered to hold a line from North of Comilla to CHITTAGONG against the approaching Japanese who were considered likely to make the attempt of advancing directly into India following the fall of AKYAB. It was a small and inexperienced force they would have found blocking their path, and it is perhaps fortunate to the extreme that the attempt was never made at this period.

To those who know Eastern Bengal, the difficulties confronting troops digging defensive positions will easily be realised. The whole country consists of miles of rice fields enclosed by small "bunds" or low earth walls, the only cover being inside the villages, which are built up on a higher level and enclosed in trees and vegetation. It was impossible to dig one foot without drawing water, and consequently all positions had to be built up inside a village area with earth and Sand bags, a very tedious and lengthy proceeding. From June to November all Companies occupied the same positions, and throughout the Monsoon rains awaited the arrival an enemy, who never came. The level of the water rose to such an extent that many occupied buildings were submerged and various outlying section positions were so marooned that it was only possible to send them their supplies and rations by boat. Abundant mosquitoes, leeches, prickly heat and other skin diseases all contributed to make this a particularly trying time. With the ground entirely water-logged it was well nigh impossible to exercise the men, and even training of any description was difficult to carry out. It required the highest ingenuity on the part of all officers to keep up their mens interest, so little was there of an active nature that could be done.

It was at this time that the sad news came of the death by drowning of Lieutenat I.G. Manning, while on a Local Jungle Warfare course. Although this officer had only been with the Battalion a few months, he had become very popular with all officers and respected by the men. His loss was very deeply regretted by all ranks by whom he will always be remembered.

With the ending of the rainy season, life took on a more hopeful aspect. To start with nearly all men had managed to get three weeks leave, by which morale increased perceptibly, and

secondly all current rumours seemed to suggest the prospect of early moves in a South easterly direction, and the possiblity of some "action"

In November B. Company had moved to CHITTAGONG and shortly after went to Cox's Bazaar further down the coast, and soon the remainder of the Bn. now under 53 Bde. was concentrated in CHITTAGONG. Here C & D Companies were doing Coastal defence along the PETANGA peninsula and A Company protected the important KARNAPULI bridge to the North. Sea bathing, dry weather and training exercises all helped to make this time stimulating and enjoyable, and proved a pleasant contrast to the preceeding inactive months. From "Sitreps" too news came of the gradual and surprisingly unimpeded advance of the forward elements of 14 Div. into the Arakan, and it seemed likely that others Companies of ours would shortly be called upon to move forward with them. During one of the few Jap air raids on CHITTAGONG at this time, a flight of "Zeros" came low over the peninsula in a sweep. At least 18 M.M.Gs. from C & D Companies opened up manned by officers, and men alike, and sprayed the air with bursts. Later news came that one of the Zeros had been shot down in the Sea some way further down the Coast and as it was pierced with .303 only, it was credited by the R.A.F. to the Bn. much to every one's satisfaction. Much dispute took place between C & D Coys as to whom had been successful, and O.C., D Coy. considerably weakened his case by hanging up an aeroplane wheel in his Mess, claiming that it belonged to the crashed plane, discovered near his lines, which on closer inspection was found to have British markings!!

In early January of 1943, C Company moved into Cox's Bazaar, from where B Company had previously left, and who were now advancing with the forward troops of 47 Bde. pushing down the MAYU peninsula South of newly captured MAUNGDAW and BUTHIDAUNG. Shortly after this, A Company was ordered down to join B Company on the Western side of the MAYU range, and from now onwards it is necessary to record events in two narratives. Firstly, the history of B and A Companies (the latter was relieved by C Coy.) and secondly of A & D Coys. which operated near to each other.

MAUNGDAW and BUTHIDAUNG had been captured without opposition and it appeared hopeful that we might soon advance to the end of the MAYU peninsula and obtain a "jumping off" place for an eventual assault on AKYAB. 47Bde. advancing down the narrow peninsula encountered stiff opposition about 10 miles to the North in the DONBAIK area, however and were there halted. The country consisted of a belt of fairly open country between the Sea and the sharply rising hills running down the centre of the peninsula, the gap between this belt and the range being filled by thick woods covering the foothills. A series of parallel nalas and dry river beds ran down the peninsula at right angles to the line of the hills, and it was inside one of these nullahs that the Japanese had built themselves an intricate and strongly fortified system of inter connected bunker positions. Having been unable to capture this position in an initial daylight assault in which B Coy. played its part our troops dug themselves in along the line of the next nullah, and only 300 yards from the enemy.

For the next $2\frac{1}{2}$ months this intervening strip was to become a no man's land reminiscent of the last war and was to be the scene of much bloodshed in the many unsuccessful attacks that we put in on the enemy positions. B Coy. had 2 Pls. along the forward line of our defensive area and one slightly to the rear on the coast, which could also fire on the enemy position, and stayed in the same posts for over five weeks until relieved by C Coy.

A Coy. had meanwhile taken up positions on the famed "Twin Knobs" at the Eastern end of the enemy position, an unenviable spot, which was mortared by the Japs day and night. All ammunition, water and other supplies had to be man handled and troops there were maintained only with great difficulty.

The strain of living so close to the enemy for such long periods was considerable particularly as one rarely if ever caught a glimpse of Jap movement, so excellent was his use of cover and concealment. In fact there can be no doubt that at this stage of the war the Japanese forces in Arakan were considerable better trained and more seasoned than our own troops, of whom none had seen previous action, and consisted largely of battalions, like ourselves with no former experience of warfare. One could stare at the Jap

line for hours on end with binoculars and scarcely see a twig move or a leaf displaced.

Three major attacks were put in by I4 Div, on the Jap DONBAIK position during Jan, Feb and March the last being made by the British Brigade of five Battalions strong who had come down to reinforce our troops. None of these attacks succeeded and resulted in very heavy loss of life. All followed the same pattern, the initial heavy barrage of 25 pounders and M.M.Gs. followed by the assault of the infantry, early reports of success in reaching the Jap nullah, a break of no news, then gradual and increasing Stories of the infantry split up in small parties being gradually forced to halt by the withering fire of Jap L.M.Gs. on fixed lines inside the position and eventual withdrawal of the survivours.

In all these attacks our M.M.Gs. were called upon to play their part in giving supporting fire, but it is doubtful in view of the very solid defences that the enemy had constructed that any very satisfactory fire effect was obtained other than keeping the enemy's "heads down" unitil the last possible minute before the infantry attack went in.

Although by our inability to observe Japanese movement, it was often difficult to believe that the enemy was so close, he kept us in no doubt as to his presence by the use of his mortars and 75 M.M. gun fire. With the 4 in mortar the Jap was particularly accurate and our M.M.G. positions came in for much attention, necessitating frequent adoption of alternative positions. Even so, quite a number of casualties were caused to our men by enemy Mortar fire. Air raids also were very frequent at that time, and during Jan, and Feb, Japanese planes were more in evidence than our own, often bombing our areas, and carrying out ground straffs. Luckily only A company suffered casualties through enemy air action, but a Pl of B Coy. had a lucky escape one day when 3 medium calibre bombs fell within 15 yards of its position, covering the men and guns with earth and stones but causing no other damage.

C Company commanded by Capt. Stevens relieved A company commanded by Capt. Mohd. Khan in early Feb. and

joined B Company commanded by Capt. Francis who had already been in position for a month.

It is difficult when events are considered in retrospect to record consecutively happenings during this period of essentially static warfare, and all that stands out clearly is the constant anxiety of waiting, the discomforts of living for weeks on end in holes in the ground, and, the growing feeling of frustration at our inability to make progres.

It is most encouraging to remember the great fortituds with which the men faced this difficult period of hardship and discomfort, their first experience of active service, and during the most trying periods the morale of all ranks was of a very high standard.

One particular "shoot" we carried out is worth recalling. The Japanese were known to be using cetain tracks through the hills after nightfall for bringing up their supplies, and it was decided to harass these particular areas by concentrated machine gun fire. For this task 4 sections of B. Coy. and 4 Sections of C. Coy. were detailed and as darkness fell the 16 gun teams slowly came into previously reconnoitred positions along the line of the coast, and on a given signal all 16 M.M.Gs. blazed into action, and for 15 minutes kept up an unending volley of fire over the whole area. Results could not be checked as our forces never reached as far as the target area during that campaign, but judging by the very strong enemy artillery and mortar counter fire with which the Jap reacted, it is hoped that he was caused at the least, great embarrassment.

During early April the Japanese began to land troops on the eastern side of the MAYU peninsula, further north, and therefore behind our positions, threatening our whole L. of C. and it became apparent that a general withdrawal from the DONBAIK position would have to take place. A small force under Colonel Hopkins 2 i/c of 6 Bde with B. Coy. was first sent back 10 miles to protect KYAUKPANDU and INDIN, as these were considered the most likely Jap objectives for cutting the road. Then the difficult withdrawal of the main body of 6 Bde including C. Coy. began,

who after fighting a number of rearguard actions, and extricating themselves with great difficulty arrived back at INDIN.

Sub. Mohd Afsar and his Pl. in C. Coy. deserve special mention here. This Pl. was occupying the most forward position in the line, and by an unfortunate oversight were not informed by the infantry Coy. Comander under whose command they were, as to the time of the withdrawal. The consequence being that one morning Subedar Mohd Afsar and his men found themselves entirely alone and unsupported in front of the Jap lines. With great resources however the Subedar brought his platoon out, and after several hours of difficult movement, through rivers across which the bridges had been blown and entirely without information, the Platoon eventually rejoined the remainder of the Company.

Before the main body of 6 Bde., who had reached INDIN could join up with Col. Hopkins force at KYAUKPANDU the Japanese cut the road in between these two villages and followed this up by over running INDIN in a night raid, and destrcying 6 Bde. H.Q. in which the Brigadier himself lost his life. The subsequent battle by which the battalions of 6 Bde. broke out and joined up at KYAUKPANDU is a story in itself, and the scenes on the beaches over which swarms of infantry were moving, must have resembled a minor DUNKIRK. Throughout this time both B & C Companies were constantly engaged and for the first time it became possible to fire at targets which could be observed and at Japanese soldiers in the open. Enemy guns which had been brought across the hill tracks fired persistently, and this phase of the campaign was one of the most hard fought, and expensive in both men and material.

The withdrawal northwards continued until positions were finally taken up in DILPARA and LAMBAGUNA south of MAUNGDAW where B & C Companies respectively dug in. No further action by these two companies took place however and they were relieved by equivalent units of the M.G.Bn. 12 F. F. Regt. in May, for a well earned rest. B. & C. coys. were then sent back to CHITTAGNG.

And now as to the fortunes of A and D Companies:—

A Coy. had been relieved in early Feb. by C Coy. and went back to Cox's Bazaar. At the end of Feb. however it was called

back into action but this time on the other side of the MAYU range, where it joined 55 Bde at the time of its withdrawal from RATHEDAUNG. The coy. went into action immediately at TIZWE. The Japanese were forcing us back as quickly as they could and it was only 2 days later that the Bde was forced back to TAUNGMAN where it was immediately relieved by 71 Bde of 26 Div. A coy. went with them back to BUTHIDAUNG being relieved by D Coy. under command of Capt. DAVIES.

D Coy. had meanwhile been kept on coastal defence in Chittagong. In early Jan Capt. Skinner was posted away from the Bn., much to the regret of all ranks and especially the Jats. Capt. B. M. Davies had assumed command of this coy. When Bn. H.Q. moved in the middle of Jan to MANGDAW D Coy. became a rear H.Q. of the Bn. In Chittagong, life, owing to the rapid advances of 14 Div., became very quiet and apart from sporadic Jap air raids took on quite a peace time air.

On the 1st of March however urgent orders were received for the coy. to proceed to Buthidaung and from there to join 71 Ind. Inf. Bde. at TAUNGMAW.

After two days of feverish activity the coy. with its transport moved by train to DOHAZARI, from where it moved by road to Buthidaung. After a wait of two days the coy. proceeded by road to TAUNGMAW.

The Japanese attack in this sector had now exhausted itself, and the next 3 weeks were, in spite of rumour and official expectation, uneventful, apart from a small amount of Japanese shell fire and occasional "jitter" parties.

On the 23rd April withdrawal orders were received and were carried out at night, one Platoon of D Coy. remaining to the last and eventually withdrawing with guns mounted in trucks.

On arrival KINDAUNG the coy. made new defensive positions and stayed until 1st May. The Japanese only put in one appearance in the form of a Recce Patrol. Here D Coy. drew its first blood by killing 3 of the enemy and wounding several others. On the 1st May withdrawal orders were received in order to keep

the same grid line of defence with the Bde, on the west side of the hills. The Bde. withdrew to BUTHIDAUNG.

At this time A coy still with 55 Bde. moved a few miles south of Buthidaung as a stop to any Jap attack on BUTHIDAUNG which was to be held at all costs. It was in these defensive positions that A Coy had several direct shoots killing very many of the enemy. Capt. Tybjerg had assumed command of this Coy and it was mainly due to his tireless efforts that such good results were obtained.

The general situation now was that both sides of the MAYU Range were now securely guarded and the only possible line of Japanese advance was the line of the hills themselves. These however were regarded by us as impenetrable" — The Japanese did not! On May the 10th the fateful news was received that the main road MAUNGDAW—BUTHIDAUNG had been cut, and the Japs were advancing in an Easterly Direction on Buthidaung. Though the original orders had been to defend Buthiadaung to the last man and the last round it soon became apparent a withdrwal would be ordered.

55 Bde. withdrew from in front of Buthidaung to a position in the hills 7 miles North. Two Battalions of 71 Bde. also withdrew leaving I LINCOLNS and D Coy to defend Buthidaung itself.

On May 10th orders were received for the force to carry out a withdrawal action and to march over the NAUKIDAWK Pass which was no more that a small irregular path on the Hills. This meant that D Coy would have to manhandle its guns and a certain amount of ammunition. The ensuring march of approx 20 miles without food or water through nullas and over the heights of the Mayu Range with the ever present menace of the pursuing Japanese will always remain in the memory of this Coy. After a day and a night the column, almost exhausted, arrived near Mangdaw —as did A Coy who had marched on a parallell and equally difficult course.

After only a few hours rest D Coy went into defensive positions to the west of Mangdaw under command of the M. G. Bn. F. F. Regt.

Lt.-Col. H. E. SYER.

Lt.-Col. E. JOHNSON.

Col. B. R. GODLY.

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A Coy and Bn. H. Q. now relieved, proceeded back to Chittagong.

After 4 days in MAUNGDAW a further withdrawal took place leaving MAUNGDAW abandoned. The withdrawal of D Coy was by river as far as BAWLI BAZAAR. Thence by truck to Chittagong to rejoin the Bn.

On May 23rd the Bn. moved to Ranchi from where, on June 25 the Bn. returned to Bareilly for refitting and reorganization.

CHAPTER III

The Bn. arrived in Bareilly on June 24th and were put into very good guarters adjoining the fort. It was at this period that the Bn. lost the services of Lt. HATORN and Lt. TURNER on their transfer to the Nevy.

It was impossible to send the whole Bn. on leave in one party owing to accommodation difficulties and leave parties went off piecemeal thereby adding to the training difficulties.

Orders arrived changing the organisation of the Bn. from 48 M.M.G. to 24 M.M.G. and 24 4'2" mortars. The latter was at the time a new weapon to India, and appeared to have great possibilities.

Although we had to wait some time before receiving the new Mortars training started initially on the 3" Mortar the drill for which was similiar to the 4'2" and with the help of the Training Centre, mortar cadres were soon in full swing.

A small cadre of officers V.C.Os. and N.C.Os. were despatched to SAUGOR to learn the new weapon. and on return passed on their knowledge to the rest of the Bn. At the begining of Sept. the new Commanding Officer Lt.-Col. H.E. Syer arrived vice Lt.-Col. R. H. Lowe.

There followed a period of much hard training and experimenting lightened for the men by sports and for the officers by the social life of Bareilly.

With the men's health improving daily and the initial change over having taken place the newly constituted Bn. began to take shape.

In Oct. the long awaited 4'2" Mortars and about the same time the new Bn. transport of 50 Jeeps and 50 Dodges arrived.

Training proceeded apace and by the end of Nov. field firing with both M.M.Gs. and Mortars had almost been completed.

At this period Capt. Russell and Capt. Squires joined the Bn.

The organisation of the Bn. was now that of 3 larger Coys. instead of the original 4.

X-Coy. being Commanded by Capt. B. M. Davies Y-Coy. by Capt. P. W. Francis Z-Coy. by Capt. M. Tybjerg.

The Bn. 2 i/c Major CAULFIELD-KERNEY left the Bn. to proceed to ITALY as 2 i/c of the MAHRATTA M. G. Bn. All ranks were very sorry to see him go, after having done so much for the benefit of the Bn.

At the end of Dec. the sad news arrived that the Bn. would not take 4'2" Mortars into action owing to the lack of ammunition in the Eastern zone and the Bn. had to return to 3" mortars. A great disappointment after all the training that had been put in, and the high standard of efficiency reached.

It was not long after this however that orders to proceed to Imphal were received and on Jan. 22nd 1944 the Regimental Centre Band for the 2nd time played the Bn. out of Bareilly Station, back again for another spell of active service which was to last until the Bn. finally returned to Bareilly over two years later for disbandment.

CHAPTER IV

The Imphal Campaign 1944.

By 9th February the complete Bn. was concentrated at WANGING about 25 miles from Imphal just off tne main Imphal-Tammu Rd.

This proved a most pleasant camp site, and although acommodation for the men was restricted mainly to tents or tarpaulines, a few additional Bashas were build for them in Coy areas. Officers lived in Bashas on an open space behind the Mess, itself a large Basha built close to, and over-looking a pleasant and fast moving

stream. During our stay in the area this stream was a constant source of delight to officers, and men as it afforded good bathing.

On arrival, we became Corps troops under command of H.Q. 4 Corps. and spent most of January, and February settling in and training hard in excellent field firing areas in the hills to the West comparatively near the camp. At this time the Imphal area was completely quiet and very much like a normal cantonement, the nearest enemy forces being on the East bank of the Chindwin to the South, and in the hills around Tiddim, Fort White etc. some 145 miles away to the EAST.

On the 3rd of March 1944, Major E. Johnson joined the Bn as 2nd i/c an appointment which had been vacant for some months. Three days later Lt. Col. Syer, the 2nd i/c, and four Coy Comds. proceeded by jeep to TAMMU for a recce of the surrounding country, and to obtain an idea of the type of terrain in which it was likely we would fight During two days a large area was covered, including excellent views of the Chindwin and the Kawbaw Valley from suitable vantage points. This was our first experience of the devastatingly steep features which abound, and which we were destined to know so well in the months to come.

On our return to WANGING we found the place seething with rumours of surprise Japanese advances, and even of possible attacks on the Imphal area itself. The newly coined phase Tactical and administrative "BOX", first used during the abortive Jap thrust in the Arakan was at that time the catchward of the day, and on the 9th March at a short notice, an advanced party of the Bn. 2nd i/c, and four officers, with half the Bn. moved to a large hill feature about 4 miles from Imphal to prepare a new camp site on the slops of the hill, as part of the 4 Corps "Box" with a role of Corps mobile reserve.

The advanced party were faced with no easy task, for this was our first introduction to the idea of tactically laid out camps situated on the slops of extremely steep hills. Special sites for each tent had to be dug, and camouflaged from both ground level and air. Every tent and all stores had to be man-handled from the bottom of the hill, in itself no mean feat on slopes so steep that at times both hands, and feet were required to make progress.

At the end of two days a lot had been achieved, paths cut, and tents erected. Meanwhile the Bn. M.T. was busy ferrying stores etc. from Waging to the new site.

On the 12th March, Col. Syer was called to a conference at Corps H. Q., where he was told, the situation on the Tiddim Road was deteriorating, and that the Bn. as Corps reserve would proceed immediately to M.S. 127 on the Tiddim Road, and come under command of 17 Ind. Div. our main task to be the protection of the vital Bridge over the Manipur River. This marked the beginning of a nightmarish period for the whole Bn. Orders to cease all work on the new camp, and for the complete advanced party to return to Wanging at once, were received from an L. O. at 9-15 p.m. the same day. It was indeed a bombshell to the advanced party after all the toil and labour they had expended in the camp. However by the time the Bn. M. T. arrived sleepy "jawans" had been routed out of bed, and with whatever they could carry were ready to embus. All tents and remaining stores had to be left "in situ".

Meanwhile at Bn. H.Q. in Wanging, arrangements were being made for an immediate move. The C. O. with his recce party of Coy. Comds. etc. moved off at 0200 hrs. leaving the Bn. with its M.T., and men embussed in G. P. Tpt. to move off under the 2nd i/c at 0400 hrs. Despite the short notice and dispersion of the Bn. everything was ready by the appointed time, and leaving behind a small rear party to clear up the mess, the Bn. moved off at 0415 hrs. on the 13th March.

It is of interest to record that at dawn the following morning the new camp site area just vacated was heavily bombed, and straffed, during which the 2nd i/c's tent received a direct hit. "Its an ill wind etc".

Once out of the Imphal plain the road wound, and twisted in torturous curves with steep inclines, followed by equally steep descents, thoughout the 127 miles to the R.V. In addition to our own large convoy, the road was full of traffic moving in both directions, so that despite all efforts our convoy was by noon hopelessly mixed up with other units vehicles.

By about 1530 hrs. on the 13th the leading element of the convoy had reached a large administrative area at M.S. 82, and

the 2 i/c decided to halt to enable the convoy to close up. This soon proved to be an extremely long process, and as orders were received that it was essential for the Bn. to reach its destination as quickly as possible, it was decided to send one company on ahead as soon as it could be formed.

At about 1630 hours one Coy. under Command of Capt. Russell moved off while the remainder concentrated along the road, as and when the vehicles arrived. By about 2015 hrs, only a few vehicles had not come in, and it was decided to move on. From the latest information received it was abvious that a Jap force was approaching the road about M.S. 106, and doubt existed whether the convoy would get through before the arrival of advanced enemy elements on the road. The next few hours were extremely trying for every body, but particularly so for the drivers, as the road climbed, and dropped unceasingly in terrific gradients, the surface was bad, and in places very narrow. A ceaseless flow of traffic containing, admin units, stores, and guns etc was met, moving back to M.S. 82, and for vehicles to pass on what was virtually a one way road, required a steady nerve, and careful driving, and this continuing over a period of eight hours of pitch darkness imposed a great mental strain on drivers, most of whom had been at the wheel for over 24 hours. However no incidents occurred either from enemy action, or vehicles accidents, and the convoy eventually reached M.S. 109 at about 3-30 a.m.

Within half an hour of our arrival firing opened up on the road above the the camp, where the Japs had ambushed an out going convoy and the road was cut behind us. Prior to again moving forward from 109 the C.O. was contacted at M.S. 127 by telephone, who ordered the Bn. to remain at M.S. 109, and await his arrival with the recce group.

The battle for the Tiddim Rd. had begun.

This is a record only of a general nature, and it is not proposed to deal with the happenings at M.S. 109 in any detail. Let it suffice to say that for those in it, it was a period not easily forgoton.

From 0400 hrs. on the 14th March until about 0700 hrs. 17th the Bn. area was subjected to numerous Jap attacks mostly at night, all of which were beaten off by our men. During one of

these attacks Capt. Russell was seriously wounded, and had to be evacuated. The Bn. mortars, and machine guns were in constant action throughout that period, and it is believed caused considerable casualties among the enemy. Just before dawn on 17th the Japs penetrated the perimeter held by another small unit on our left, and rendered the whole of our position untenable. With the concurrence of the senior commander, the C.O. had no alternative but to order a withdrawal to a new position.

Evacuation of all other personnel in the camp via the nullah to the North began while the Bn. held covering positions until the area had been cleared. By about 0630 hrs. on the 18th this had been completed, and the Bn. commenced to withdraw, moving straight out across the hills to the North with the intention of making for M.S. 96 which it was hoped was still in our hands.

This was a gruelling march over high features necessitating sometimes the use of hands and feet to get up. Men carrying heavy equpt such as machine guns, had a particularly difficult time. The only food available was the emergency ration on the man, and as there was no means of knowing just how far it would be necessary to walk, even this meagre allowance had to be conserved. A halt for the night was made in a suitable area in thick jungle. Starting again at Dawn, this by now exhausted body of men finally reached M.S. 96 which was found to be held by a Bn. of Gurkhas, at about 1700 hrs. spent the night inside the Gurkha perimeter, lying on the road, or in the ditch alongside the road, and the following morning, the 20th March moved back to M.S. 82 in M.T. to reorganise.

A lifetime seemed to have passed since we left WANGING hurriedly on the morning of the 13th March, until we reached M.S. 96 in the evening of the 19th. First the difficult, and tiring drive which in fact for the drivers started at 2,130 hrs. on the 12th when they proceeded to the new camp to collect the advanced party.

From then until arrival at M.S. 109 they drove continuously for about 36 hrs. The Bn. had little rest during the whole period starting with the drive, four days in action, and ending with the walk across the hills, and were very tired indeed when they reached M.S. 96 on the 19th.

Here we must digress to follow the fortunes of Z Coy.

It will be remembered that the Bn. Recce Gp. proceeded direct to M.S. 127. From there the C.O. received orders that one Coy. would remain at M.S. 100 to deny the high ground covering the road to the enemy. Z Coy. (Musalman) was detailed, and Major Tybjerg returned to M.S. 100 intercept the convoy and to pull out Z Coy. as it passed.

Positions were taken up by the Coy. on the right and left of the road, and were completed by early morning 14 March. A patrol went out to M.S. 102 to endeavour to find water for the Coy., followed later by Major Tybjerg who went out in his Jeep to see how the patrol was getting on, as water was urgently required. He was returning at about 1000 hrs. and was ambushed by a party of enemy. The Jeep Driver was killed immediately. Major Tybjerg was last seen by his orderly who got away, defending himself by the Jeep with his pistol. No trace of his body was found, and it is believed, based upon subsequent unofficial information that he was wounded and taken prisoner, then removed to Burma where he was killed by the Japanese because he refused to divulge information. In Major Tybjerg the Bn. lost a very fine officer indeed.

Capt. Squier took over command of the Coy. which was from then continuously engaged by the enemy.

During the afternoon Capt. B. P. Singh who had been delayed on the road reached the camp, and on hearing of the acute shortage of food and water, and the increasing strength of the enemy, volunteered to return to M.S. 82 to inform the Bde. Comd. of the position. As a result of his report two coys. of the 3/5th R.G.R. were sent forward, and guided through the jungle by Capt. Wood reached the camp about midday on the 15th. By this time the enemy under cover of diversionary attacks had worked round to the rear of the position cutting the road between them and M.S. 82.

Effective offensive action by the Gurkhas supported by our Motars and M.M.Gs. resulted in driving the enemy off several local features, but water was exhausted and ammunition running out,, and on the evening of the 18th the O.C. Gurkhas decided to withdraw back to M.S. 96. The road was still held by the enemy

between M.S. 100 and M.S. 96. and the withdrawal starting at 0200 hrs. was carried out by moving East down into the valley and thence along the nullah, and up the hill side again to M.S. 96, after which the Coy. moved back to M.S. 82 to await the arrival of the Bn.

Casualties in Z Coy. during this period were 1 B.O. and 30 I.O.Rs. killed and wounded.

Hav. Lall Khan the S.B. havildar throughout put up a first class show administering the wounded, and by his efforts undoubtedly saved many lives.

No communication with Bn. H.Q. had been possible, and Z Coy. were as ignorant of what was happening to the Bn., as Bn. H.Q. was regarding Z Coy. Each knew the other was in action for it was possible to hear each others M.Gs.—the rest was confined to conjecture until we met up again at M.S. 82 on the 20th March.

The general picture at this time was of 17 Ind. Div. fighting its way back from TIDDIM towards Imphal, while 49 Ind. Inf. Bde. and 37 Ind. Inf. Bde. were forcing their way along the road to meet 17 Div., and allow them to pass through.

CHAPTER V

The admin Box at M.S. 82 was being transformed into a strong rearguard position held by 49 Bde. under whose command the Bn. came, on our arrival in the position, and there we remained holding a portion of the perimeter until the 3rd April. By then 17 Div. had withdrawn through the position followed later by 49 Bde. on relief by 37 Bde. The Jap. in occupation of the commanding ground around M.S. 96, were able to make the "box" rather unhealthy with heavy Arty fire from long range against which our own Arty was outranged.

Lt. Creasy had to be evacuated with a bad attack of Jaundice on 21st March. This had first started at M.S. 109, and had daily become worse. In spite of it he marched out with the Bn. carrying a full pack, and equpt, although only sheer determination could have kept him going during the walk over the hills, bad enough even for a fit man.

On the 3rd April the Bde. withdrew from M. S. 82 to the accompaniment of concentrated shelling, the heaviest to date, and made its way back in a series of rearguard actions, over a period of days.

From M. S. 41 X Coy moved on 6th April to report to the Commander of the Box at KANGLATOMBI on the Dimapur—Imphal Road, and having passed through 49 Bde. at M. S. 30 the Bn., after detaching Z Coy to 49 Bde., moved to a new camp site at LANGTHABALL to hold a series of high features covering the TULIHAL air strip, and the country to the NORTH of the main road, under command 23 Ind. Div.

X Coy.

Leaving the Bn. at M. S. 41 X Coy under Major Davies with Capt. Dron as his 2 i/c moved in M. T. on the 6th April to KANGLA TOMBI a defensive administrative box at M. S. 118 on the DIMAPUR—IMPHAL Rd.. arriving about 1300 hrs. the same day. Positions were hurriedly taken up on the West of the perimeter, M.M.Gs. forward supported by their 3" Mortars.

During the night the box was heavily shelled by enemy artillery from about 700 yds. range, and after heavy fighting the Japs penetrated the Northern face of the perimeter.

The position was restored at first light by counter attack by tanks and a Company of the West Yorks, but the enemy well supported and in strength were gradually encircling the position. At 1500 hrs. the 7th April the box Commander ordered a withdrawal towards Imphal. X Coy with tanks formed a rearguard, and with R.A.F. support, the withdrawal was carried out in close contact with the enemy who however did not follow up once our forces were clear of the area. The Coy slept at the side of the main road that night and on the 8th April rejoined the Bn. at LANGTHABAL. Casualties had been 1 killed 4 wounded.

Z Coy.

The Coy under Maj. Squier and Lt. Wood remained with 49 Ind. Inf. Bde, from 6th April until relieved by X Coy. on the 20th April. The position at M. S. 30 remained under constant enemy Artillery fire which caused considerable damage. One M. G. was knocked out, and another badly damaged while one of the Coy.

trucks received a direct hit and burnt out. Lt. Wood had a narrow escape when his trench received a direct hit, two minutes after he had left it to visit his platoon.

From the 12th April until the 9th May one M.M.G. Platoon of Y Coy. under Lt. Banks was attached to 9 Inf. Bde. of 5 Ind. Division on the UKRUL Rd., taking part in a series of actions some of which were in support of the 3/9th Jats. It was during this period that Jem. Abdul Hafiz of the 3/9th won his V. C. This platoon rejoined the Bn. on the 9th of May at M. S. 27 on the TAMMU road.

The Bn. less detachments remained in the LANGTHABAL area until the 9th May when it moved to PALEL under command of 20 Ind. Division. Apart from daily air raids and patrolling little had happened during this period. Several Jap aircraft were shot down by A.A. guns, and on one occassion Y Coys. M.M.Gs. claimed hits on a low flying Jap bomber aircraft which subsequently crashed some miles away.

The Bn. less X Coy took up position on the perimeter of BULL BOX from 9th May until the 12th when it moved to KACHIN, about five miles to the East, under command of 100 Inf. Bde. with a task of protecting the right flank of the vital PALEL airstrip.

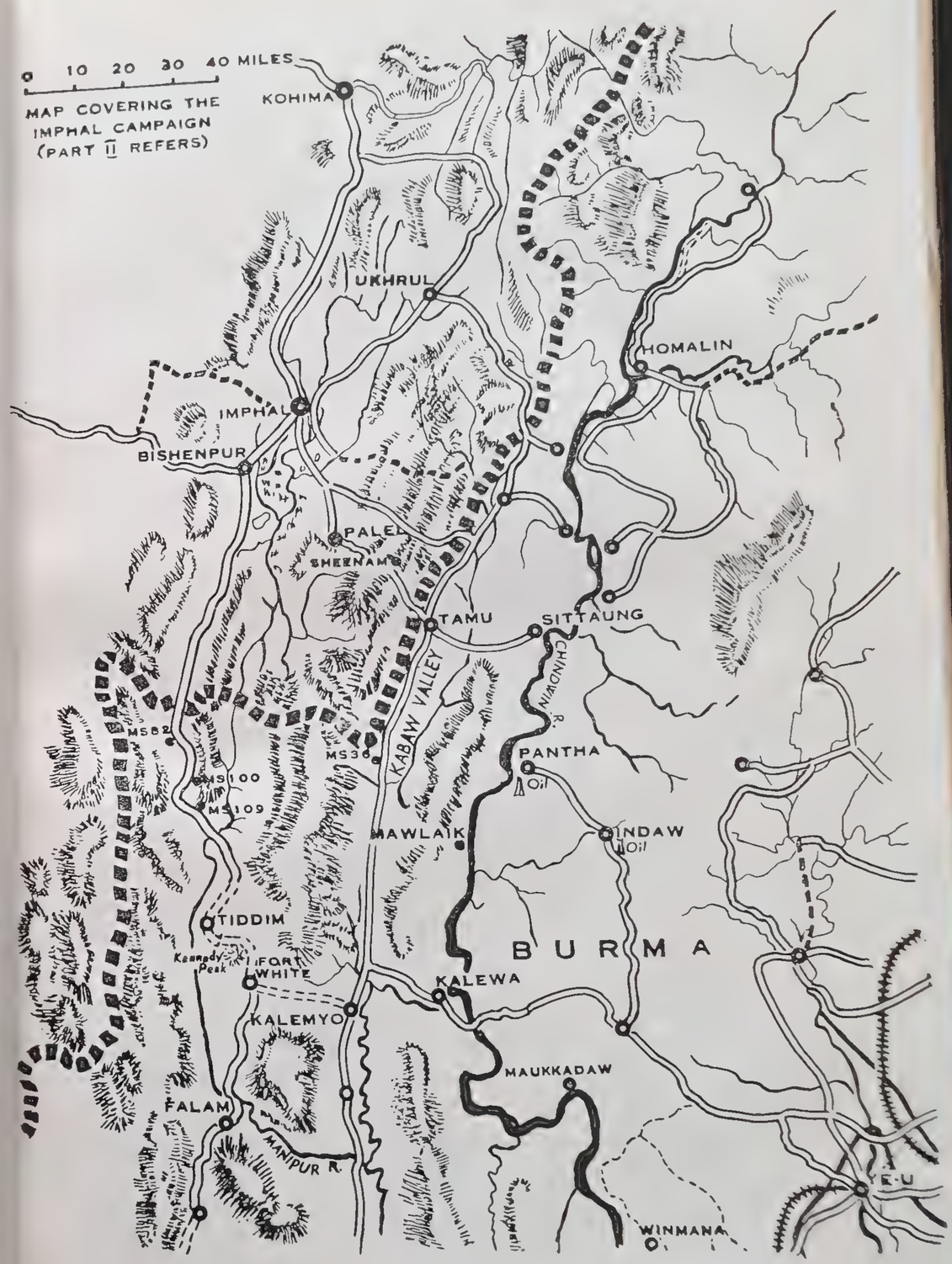
X Coy.

It was decided to relieve Z Coy who were with 32 Inf. Bde. at M. S. 17 on the TIDDIM Rd. by X Coy, and the relief was duly effected on April 12th.

Between then and the 14th May when the Coy rejoined the Bn. they took part in a number of engagements, notable of which were those of BISHENPORE and POTSANGBAM.

Fierce attempts were made by the Japs to dislodge our troops from this area, all of which failed. Any success by the enemy in this area only 17 miles from Imphal, would have constituted a very serious threat to the Imphal plain from the East.

Here it might be appropriate to take a brief glance at the general position as then effecting this vital gateway to the borders of India—the Imphal plain.



To the North the great battle for KOHEMA was in full swing with its gallant band of defenders stubbornly holding all efforts of the Jap until the arrival of reinforcements from DIMAPUR.

5 Ind. Div. had been flown in to Imphal straight from action inthe Arakan, and were in contact with the enemy about 27 miles North of Imphal, and also on the UKRUL rd to the N.E.

On the Tiddim road to the South as previously stated 32 Bde. were denying the enemy any further advances along that road. 17 Ind. Div. in spite of wishful thinking Jap propaganda had completed their organised withdrawal from Tiddim, and were re-forming prior to the offensive soon to come.

Away to the S.E. 20 Ind. Div. had made a successful withdrawal from TAMU to prepared positions around the high features near SHEENAM, astride the TAMU - IMPHAL main road.

23 Ind. Div. were protecting the right, and left flank of this southern area.

The fertile Imphal plain was indeed in a state of siege, but moral remained high throughout, and even at the height of the siege supplies, and personnel continued to arrive by air. Supplies dropped by parachute on forward units because a common event, yet the standard of rations remained at a very high level throughout this difficult period.

The Jap after a series of initial successes had shot his bolt, and was soon to suffer for his arrogance, and taste the real mettle of the Indian Army.

Y Coy. under command Major Francis left KACHCHIN on 9—5—44 to report to 80 Inf. Bde. at SHEENAM where the M.G. Platoons played an active part in the defence of that area, and in supporting infantry attacks. Jap. artillery of all calibres from his 75 m.m. guns to his 150 m.m. howitzers pounded the area day and night, and his infantry made repeated attacks against various positions without success. On one important feature known as Malta, the fighting was particularly severe, and one M.M.G. section, which had to be relieved every three days, covered an approach from which the Japs constantly made night attacks.

It was here that on May 23rd Havildar Phul Singh, distinguished himself. His section having suffered several casualties, from a preliminary enemy artillery barrage, and though himself badly wounded in the thigh, he rallied his remaining men to beat off Japs. who attempted to storm his M.M.G. post, by propping himself on his elbow and throwing grenade after grenade, until the Japs. were forced to retreat leaving many dead on the wire. An act of gallantry and devotion to duty which later earned him the I.D.S.M.

On May 25 Y Coy., returned to Bn. H.Q. having been relieved by Z Coy.

During this month the Bn. casualties amounted to 11 killed, and 23 wounded including Jem. Alam. Gir. who accidentally stepped on to a mine and was blown up, while on his way to Sheenam.

Capt. Hough with one platoon of Y Coy. Mortars left on 10-5-44 for a position known as SITA a high feature out in the blue to the N.W. of WANGING to come under command of the KALI BAHADUR Regt. where they remained until 21st July, subsequently reverting to Bn. control.

During June Z Coy. remained in action around SHEENAM taking part in a number of spirited actions. The monsoon was in full swing and conditions were foul, heavy rain and mist prevailed, sometimes being so dense that visibility was NIL. Inches of mud, and legions of rats in additional to the Japanese variety all added to the general discomfort.

Again a call for machine guns came from 5 Div., which at that time was without a Machine Gun Bn. of its own and on the 6th May, Lt. Banks with one platoon reported to the H.Q. 123 Bde. at KANGALA TOMBI (since retaken by us). The offensive had been resumed in this area, and the platoon afforded valuable assistance to Bns. of 123 Bde., and later of 9 Bde. including the 3/9 Jats. The platoon was under command of the 3/9 Jats, when as the leading Bn. of the Bde. contact was made with 33 Corps troops advancing towards Imphal on 22-6-44. For the first time since late March, the famous Manipur road from DIMAPUR to IMPHAL was again under our control, and could be used as the main L of C. The siege of IMPHAL had been broken !

From KACHIN mortar platoons were sent to strengthen the defences of BULL BOX to the West of the Palel strip. From their positions they were frequently in action against enemy concentrations, or harrasing their positions.

Casualties in the Bn. during the month were 2 killed 9 wounded.

Bn. H.Q. remained at KACHIN until the 22nd July when it moved to M.S. 31 on the TAMU Rd. under command of 5 Bde. of 2 Div.

X Coy. mortars and M.M.Gs. supported Infantry attacks on to a high feature known as KHUDEI KHUNOU, and at one period filled a gap left by infantry personnel who had become casualties, holding the area against Jap. attacks, while the M.Gs. inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy, an action resulting in the capture of Jap. equipment, and four P.Ws.

X Coy.

Another M.G. platoon of X Coy. came under command of 49 Ind. Inf. Bde. who were to carry out a long and difficult outflanking movement in conjunction with the main thrust down the TAMU road. M.Gs. were carried on pack, as the movement involved crossing wild and mountainous country by narrow foot paths. Lt. Ranganathan Commanded the platoon which with the Mahrattas, and Raj Rif, rendered valuable supporting fire in several actions until the objective was reached.

No. 4 platoon of X Coy. came under command of 1 Inf. Bde. and on July 23rd moved on a mule basis in support of the Patialas, to capture the LOCHAO Bridge, and subsequently supporting attacks by the Raj Rifs and Mahrattas.

Y Coy.

Y Coy. spent from the 1st to 19th July in KACHIN, then moving to occupy important features covering the L of C to SHEENAM, from which active patrolling was carried out.

On the 29 July two M.M.G. platoons of Y Coy. with two mortar platoons of X Coy. reported to H.Q. 5 Bde. of 2 Div. near SHEENAM in readiness to move forward down the TAMU road.

Z Coy.

The two M.G. platoons remained in action at SHEENAM until the 24th, when each was allotted a new task supporting infantry attacks in the counter offensive to clear the enemy off such by then well known features, as SCRAGGY—LYNCH and CRETE. and by so doing to pave the way for 5 Bde's. advance down the TAMU road. 12 pl. were most unlucky when a stray 150 M.M. shell landed close to them when they were spread out at the road side, awaiting orders. One Havildar was killed outright, the platoon commander very seriously wounded, and who died shortly after, and four other ranks badly wounded.

The two mortar platoons of the Coy. under Lts. C. R. Singh and Didar Singh were having a busy time on features around Bull and Bullock boxes and LANGOL engaging enemy with defensive, and offensive, fire as opportunity offered.

In early August the tables were being turned, with the Japs. pulling out of the TAMU area much faster than they had entered it five months before. Two platoons of X Coy. and two of Y Coy. moved to MOREH with 5 Bde. on Aug. 4 returning to Bn. H.Q. on 9th Aug. Z Coy. had also reverted to Bn. command, so that for the first time for nearly six months the Bn. became concentrated as a complete Bn.

The first step towards chasing the Japs. out of Burma was over. The Indian Army had achieved the impossible, first by holding the enemy at a place of our own choosing, and then at the height of the Monsoon, (under conditions so bad, that previously it was thought out of the question for offensive action to be taken,) launching a counter offensive which quickly resulted in the complete defeat of the Japs. in this area up to the R. Chindwin.

At this stage, 11 East African Division took over to continue the advance down the Kawbaw valley, and on the East bank of the Chindwin, allowing 23 Ind. Div. and the Bn. a well earned rest.

As Corps troops, the Bn. then reverted to Corps command, and a suitable area for the rest and reorganisation period had to be found. By good fortune it was found that our old camp site at WANGING was empty, and permission to occupy it was obtained from 20 Ind. Div. without any difficulty.

By the end of August the complete Bn. was back again in comparative comfort at its old camp at WANGING. In the six months that had intervened since its hurried departure, the Bn. had taken part in operations on all fronts of the Imphal campaign, suffering initial reverses, but rewarded by ultimate success. During this time the Bn. had been associated with 5 Div.—17 Div.—20 Div.—23 Div. and 2 Br. Div. and it might justifiably be said that we "got around"!

During the campaign the following new officers had joined Lts. Didar Singh - Bali - Noble, and Khema Ram.

The following awards were received.

Capt. Squier	—	Mentioned in Despatches
Sub. Mohd. Afsar	—	,, ,, ,,
Sub. Des. Ram	—	,, ,, ,,
Sub. Khushal Khan	—	,, ,, ,,
Hav. Mohd. Sabir	—	,, ,, ,,
Hav. Lal Khan	—	,, ,, ,,
Sep. Rati Ram	—	,, ,, ,,
L/Nk. Aii Sher	—	M.M.
Hav. Gul Sher	—	I.D.S.M.
Hav. Phul Singh	—	I.D.S.M.

The Bn. remained in WANGING throughout Sept. and October, until 21 November, engaged in reorganising, training and getting as many men and officers as possible away on short leave.

The powers that be had decided that the existing combination of M.M.Gs. and Mortars was an unsatisfactory organisation, and had issued orders for the Bn. to become an all machine gun Bn. of 4 Coys. each of 12 guns. This was a popular move for everybody, as we had found from experience that Infantry required machine guns, and not mortars, to support them. Even more popular was the news that we were to cease being Corps troops and would in future form an integral part of an Infantry Division.

20 Ind. Div. commanded by Maj. General D. D. Gracy was then concentrated a few miles away, and soon we were adopted by them, the adoption shortly afterwards being regularised by the official blessing, and our incorporation in 20 Div. as Div. troops.

On the 26th September we were reminded that the war was still on, by a sudden order to send one platoon of M.Gs. to report to H.Q. 5 Ind. Div., who were gallantly toiling up the Tiddim Road, fighting not only Japs., but an unrelenting Nature in the form of torrential rains, mist, mud, and landslides, in their magnificent advance to retake Tiddim.

One platoon of Z Coy. under Capt. Wood and Sub Khushal Khan was detailed and departed for M.S. 100 on Sep. 27th. the last we were to see of them for some months.

Meanwhile intensive training continued in Wanging in preparation for the next phase with 20 Div. Based upon the new W.E., the Bn. was reorganised into:

W Coy. Jats—Comd. Major Davies.

X Coy. Jats—Comd. Major Francis.

Y Coy. M.Rs—Comd. Major Hough.

Z Coy. P.Ms—Comd. Major Squier.

According to the new W.E., the Bn. transport was to consist of 60 jeeps and trailers, which meant the elimination of our trusty 15 cwt. Dodge trucks. These trucks with their winches had put up a splendid performance, and had proved that there were few places a jeep could go where they couldn't, and of course had the advantage of additional "lift," over the jeep.

We were pleased therefore to learn that the additional jeeps were not available, and that trucks would be retained, and were in fact kept throughout the campaign.

At this time, and for a considerable time to come Jats were in extremely short supply, so much so that throughout most of the next campaign X Coy. were able only to put two platoons in the field instead of three.

A further serious shortage was that of Machine Guns. Although the number authorised had been increased to 48, despite frequent representations the additional weapons were not made available by the time we left Wanging, and during the initial stages of the advance into Burma only 24 out of 48 guns could be put the field.

During this period in WANGING Lt.-Creasy returned after an absence of about six months looking very fit, and a different man to when we had last seen him.

Lt.-Howick also joined the Bn. from the 7/9th Jat Regt.

CHAPTER VI

Orders were received on 10-11-44 that the Div. would concentrate in the KAWBAW valley in preparation for a further move forward.

Major Johnson with an advanced party moved off on the night of Nov. 21st. followed by the Bn. in M.T. on the 26th, and by the 1st Dec. was concentrated in the Jungle around M.S. 36.

Conditions in the Kawbaw valley were not too pleasant. It had been one of the withdrawal routes of General Alexandra's Army in 1942, then a main L of C for the Japanese, through which they had recently withdrawn closely pursued by the East African Division. Maintenance on the road which at the best of time was third class, had been nil. Bridges were down, and the surface of the road no longer existed, and for almost its whole length from TAMU onwards consisted in the main, of miles of pot holes. The rains had drawn to an unmourned end, and what had previously been a sea of mud, was then a narrow desert of sand, inches, and in places feet, deep. By virtue of the pot holes, driving was uncomfortable at 10 M.P.H., but in convoy, clouds of dust made even a speed of eight miles an hour dangerous. All suitable areas for camps had been utilised by the Japs., and thereby polluted from further use. The stench from these Jap. camps arising from the insanitary conditions normal to the Japs. and from decaying corpses was horrible, and it was a pleasure to give them a wide birth, even though it involved considerable labour cutting and clearing new camp sites from virgin jungle. Flies were a pest, and in addition to the normal danger of malaria, was added the possibility of Typhus.

However the medical authorities were ready with counter measures against disease. Mepacrine became a daily issue to combat malaria, while weekly application of D.D.T. to all clothes reduced the chances of Typhus. In addition the whole divisional area was sprayed with D.D.T. from the air.

The Z Cóy. platoon which had gone to 5 Div. from Wanging had rejoined on the 23rd Nov. after an absence of two months. Capt. Wood had unfortunately contracted Typhus, and had been evacuated from Tiddim by air, leaving Sub Khushal Khan in charge. Theirs had been no easy task, for 5 Div. had fought their way to Tiddim and beyond until they connected up with the East Africans at KALEMO, under the most atrocious conditions an unhelpful nature could devise, during which our guns had been constantly in action with various Bns., and most effective results obtained.

During the three weeks spent at M.S. 36, our main task had been to provide large working parties for employment on repairing the road, as indeed had been most Bn. of the Division. An essential task this, for without it, the road would never have stood the strain of the unceasing flow of heavy traffic using it.

Hopes of a comparatively civilized Xmas faded abruptly when orders were received for the advanced party to move off on the night of the 24th, followed by the Bn. on the 25th, Xmas day.

The Div. task was to carry out a wide outflanking movement, around the left flank of the Japs. withdrawing down the SHWEBO Rd.

Our first destination was MAUKKADAW a small steamer station on the East Bank of the R Chindwin, which was first crossed at KALEWA, by the much publicised floating Baily Bridge, the longest of its kind ever built, and a great tribute to the skill of the Sappers. Movement was at night, and harbouring by day. Although the advanced party reached MAUKKADAW on the evening of the third day after considerable difficulty due to flooded tracks, the Bn. with Div. H.Q. were forced to halt at a large chaung which had become impassible after the passing of vehicles of the advanced parties with 100 Bde. All personnel were employed often knee deep in water, on repairing the road, and on the 31st Dec. the Bn. was able to proceed and join up with the advanced party.

The Bn. had experienced difficult drives before, and were destined to cover many miles on roads little less than bullock cart tracks, but the night drive from KALEWA onwards was without

doubt the most difficult, and hair-raising journey of them all, particularly the portion through the MYTYIA Gorge with its sheer cliff on one side of the narrow road, innumerable twists and turns, and inclines that appeared to end only when they met the sky, with a drop into inky nothingness on the other side. One officer of the Bn. who had once driven from Calcutta to London, maintained that the very worst parts of that long journey, were child's play compared to the stretch now referred to.

The general line of advance of the Div. was South along the Banks of the Chindwin, but no route from MAUKKADAW capable of taking M.T. existed, and it therefore became necessary for the complete Division to re-cross the Chindwin to the West bank, advance South on that side of the river, and then re-cross the river again from ANAUKTAW to KYAUKLEGA. The two crossings presented a fairly formidable problem with the limited number of DUWKS, and rafts at the disposal of the Div., but were in fact accomplished with remarkable speed, and expediency. All moves now were by march route, and moving from staging areas daily, the Bn. eventually concentrated at WINMANA on January 9th.

From MAUKKADAW one platoon of W Coy. under Lt. HOWICK left to join 100 Inf. Bde., where they received orders to form part of a strong mobile column which was to move as rapidly as possible through BUDALIN to occupy MONYWA, a large cantonment and steamer station on the CHINDWIN. The force duly left on the 4th January, but on approaching BUDALIN found 32 Inf. Bde. in contact with the enemy who contrary to expectations were making a stubborn stand, in well dug in positions inside the village. The platoon then came under command of 32 Bde., subsequently being joined by the remainder of W Coy. which remained with the Bde. right through the Burma operations.

From WINMANA the Bn. received orders to move to M.S. 19 on the BUDALIN - MONYWA rd. by march route on 11-1-45. This was a four days march through hot and dusty country. By this time the Bn. was in good marching trim and arrived on the 15th in excellent order, and in good heart.

Before leaving the final staging camp at MAUNGDAUNG, one platoon of Z Coy. under Lt. C. R. SINGH joined 100 Bde. at

BUDALIN. The task for this Bde. was by moving around the left flank and bye-passing MONYWA to bottle up any enemy between MONYWA, and MINYMU on the West bank of the Irrawaddy.

From the time of leaving KALEYA to arrival at BUDALIN the Div. was without an L. of C., and maintenance had been entirely by Supply Dropping from the Air. The fact of it being possible to maintain a complete Division by air without hardship reflects great credit on the Air Forces concerned, and the Q staff responsible. Without it this move out into the blue would never have been possible.

At BUDALIN it was decided to construct a fair weather air strip capable of taking the largest transport aircraft, and to build up Div. stock of rations, equipment, etc. preparatory to a further advance. The airstrip was constructed by local labour under the supervision of the Sappers, and the Bn. less detachments given the task of protecting the various supply installations being set up, and to carry out local patrolling. The Bn. 2nd i/c was detailed as i/c airstrip pending the arrival of FAMO, his duties being to signal in aircraft, control the unloading of stores, and despatching aircraft after unloading.

A few days after arrival at M.S. 19, two composite coys acting as infantry were sent out to contact and contain a party of enemy reported to be in KOTHAN a small village some miles off the main road. Prior to their arrival however the plan had to be changed as the enemy had slipped out of the village during the night. The two coys then moved into KOTHAN, established a patrol base from which active patrolling was carried out for 5 days after which they rejoined the Bn.

On the 23rd Z Coy. joined 100 Ind. Inf. Bde. at KANDAW joining up with Lt. C. R. SINGH'S platoon previously despatched. The Coy. remained with this Bde. from then on.

While awaiting the arrival of machine guns, Bn. H.Q. with X and Y Coys. were usefully employed in protecting dumps, and patrolling. In this role they moved forward to the site of a new supply installation at AHPOGYIGON near ALLAGAPA on 31-1-45 passing through MONYWA which after stiff fighting in which W Coy. took part with 32 Bde., was then in our hands.

MONYWA was the Div.'s first large prize so far, and had been an important base for the Japs this side of the Irrawaddy, being served both by a railway, and steamer service on the CHINDWIN. Having been the scene of bitter fighting during the withdrawal in 1942, followed by three years of stagnation under the Japs, plus terrific pounding by artillery and aircraft in the present campaign, it is hardly surprising that little remained except ruins of what had once been a flourishing and very pleasant cantonment.

W Coy. under Major DAVIES and Lt. HOWICK had played their share in its recapture.

The new Bn. area was to form the site selected for the building up of a large supply and ordnance dump in preparation for the crossing of the Irrawaddy.

Col. SYER was placed in charge of the complete area, and its installations, responsible for patrolling, and organising the defence of the area. Small Jap parties were still operating on our side of the river, some holding villages, others moving about the country, laying ambushes, jittering Camps, and trying to disrupt the L. of C. A favourite trick was to hide mines in potholes on the road at night and cover them up with sand of which there was a plentiful supply. Some casualties to vehicles were incurred, and it became necessary for a dawn search of the road surface to be made before it could be opened to traffic, one stretch of road being allotted to the Bn. This was not a particularly pleasant job, for it had to be done quickly, which meant, a patrol moving in a truck, with men riding on the mudguards keeping a sharp look out for any tell-tail signs of disturbed surfaces. Failure to spot suspicious looking areas and demine them would obviously have been followed by quick retribution leaving little time for regrets for those concerned.

Lt. C. R. SINGH'S platoon with 100 Bde. had taken part in various actions with the 4/10th G.R. and 14/13th F.F.R. during the left flank move resulting in the capture of MINYMU an important Steamer Station on the West bank of the Irrawaddy, from which the guns were able to get in several good shoots at enemy on the opposite bank and at boat loads of enemy crossing the river. Returning to KANDAW on 24-1-45, they were joined by the remainder of Z Coy., and with the Borders, carried out

training in river crossing until the 27th, when the Coy., moved to 100 Bde. H.Q. at WUNBYE.

February began with Bn. H.Q., X and Y Coys still employed at AHPOGYIGON. W Coy. with 32 Bde. and Z Coy. with 100 Bde. Lt.-HUNTSMAN had recently joined the Bn. as Coy. Officer. Capt. WOOD looking quite fit again after his illness had rejoined, and gone out to his old Coy. Z Coy.

While in this camp the Mess Secretary had worked up quite a thriving connection with villages nearby for the supply of eggs, chicken, onions, goats, and on one occasion a young pig for the Mess. The system was mainly by barter, a bar of Lux Soap being worth four eggs, and a bottle of hair oil eight, or one chicken etc. The hair oil became extremely popular with the women, who used it freely on their hair after an initial demonstration by our sales manager Lt.-CREASY! The males of the village looked upon this as rather a waste of good eggs etc. and pandering to female vanity, however as the mess had a large stock of this hair oil, bought by some previous misguided Mess Secretary, we supported the women, cleared our old stock, and benefited by the eggs and chicken.

Preparations were going ahead for the crossing of the Irrawaddy, and as part of the plan two platoons of Y Coy under Major HOUGH moved to SATPANGON on 13 Feb. to take over the defence of the proposed embarkation area, and a third platoon to a new airstrip and area for "Q" instsllations near ALLAGAPPA.

Bn. H.Q. with X Coy. moved to a new area in ALLAGAPPA itself on 15th Feb. and on 26th Feb. crossed the Irrawaddy to YEKADIPA, where the C.O. became responsible for co-ordinating the defence of the many and varied units on the beach head.

This was not a pleasant camp. The sun beat down remorselessly on an area devoid of shade, which was not improved by the sandy nature of the soil. There was often a strong wind which whipped up the sand to a frenzy, leaving everything permanently covered. Flies there were in legion, well seasoned campaigners which were far too well trained to be intimidated by our desperate attempts to eliminate them, with flit, fly papers, oil, curses, and fly swats. Their delight must have equalled ours

when Capt. EALES inadvertantly sat on one of the many fly papers, and walked out of the Mess completely unconscious of his misfortune or of the fly paper sticking remorselessly to his behind !!

The proximity of the river was a saving grace and afforded lovely bathing to the accompaniment of the drone of spitfires, the sharp bark of their cannon, and the ear splitting roar of a battery of 25 pounders in action a short distance away up the beach.

X Coy.

New machine guns had reached us at ALLAGAPPA and it became possible to arm X Coy. with eight guns, enough for two platoons. They had been longing to get into action once more, and on 11th Feb. with Capt. EALES the two platoons joined one platoon of Y Coy. under Major HOUGH at LEYETMA to form a composite company under command of 80 Inf. Bde.

Platoons took part in several actions around PAUKTAW-POZADAW and ANYON mainly with the 9/12 F.F.R. until 19th Feb. when they crossed the Irrawaddy with 80 Bde. to take up positions around KALAN YWATHIT-YEZIN and INYA SE of the Bridgehead.

W Coy.

While 32 Bde. was resting and regrouping after the fall of MONYWA the Coy. moved forward, and came under command of 80 Bde. with whom they moved to SINNYE and NABET remaining until 8th Feb. when they reverted to 32 Bde. again at MYAUNG. Sub BIR. SINGH greatly distinguished himself while with the 3/1st G.R. at NABET winning high praise for magnificent work under enemy Arty, grenade, and small arms fire.

One battalion of 32 Bde. had been given the task of making a diversionary landing from MYAUNG to the South of the main crossing. No. 3 platoon were to cross with the assaulting troops to assist consolidation, while No. 2 platoon gave supporting fire from a sandbank in mid river. The landing was effected according to plan on the 13th Feb., and that night Major DAVIES, and Lt. HOWICK with Coy H.Q. and the remaining platoon crossed to join the platoon with the Northants on the bridgehead.

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The Japanese reacted strongly to this surprise landing, and launched counter attacks, one after the other mainly at night, all of which were repulsed, assisted by our M.G. fire which took heavy toll of the enemy and won many tributes from the men of the Northants. The bridgehead was only 800 yds. by 300 yds. in very soft sand, and no cover of any description, but in spite of these conditions and merciless enemy Artillery fire day and night, the morale of the men remained magnificently high throughout, Sub BIR SINGH again distinguished himself, and for his gallantry and superb leadership was awarded the M. C. Jem UMED SINGH was also awarded the M.C. for conspicuous bravery and leadership during this period, and further awards made to Hav. SOBHA CHAND M.M., Hav. SARDAR SINGH M.M., L/Nk. CHAND RAM M.M., L/Nk. DOD RAM M.M., and L/Nk. BALDEWA M.M. By the end of the month, the bridgehead was still firmly holding out, and resisting all enemy attempts to dislodge them, thereby fulfilling their role of containing enemy forces who would otherwise have been available for the defence of the Division's main bridgehead.

Y Coy.

Leaving one platoon covering the embarkation area, two platoons under Major HOUGH crossed the river on 24th Feb. and joined up with the X Coy. platoon under Capt. EALES with 80 Bde., and with the Devons, F.F.R., and 3/8th G.R. took part in actions around KALAN YWATHIT, KALAN and TALINGON,

Z Coy.

No. 10 and 11 platoons under the 14/13 F.F.R., and Border Regt. respectively crossed the river with the assaulting troops on the night of 13th Feb. from SATPANGON to establish the main bidgehead for the Division. The engines of some assault craft failed in midstream which caused the boats to drift downstream before the engines could be coaxed into starting again. However all landed safely on the beach and positions taken up as planned, in the face of fairly heavy small arms fire.

Little opportunity for consolidating was allowed by the enemy, who counter attacked fiercely, and in force, but suffered heavy casualties, and withdrew. The enemy maintained his attacks, during which our M.Gs. did excellent work. In the face of fierce

resistance 100 Bde's foothold gradually developed in depth, and width. Here as on 32 Bde's bridgehead enemy shelling was intense, and continuous. Prior to the crossing the known enemy gun areas were subjected to systematic bombing by a force of 100 Liberators the largest force seen on this front so far, and this undoubtedly reduced somewhat the subsequent volume of fire that could be brought to bear on the bridgehead.

With the crossing of 12 platoon on 14 Feb. Z Coy. was over complete and moving forward with the infantry, fired thousands of rounds in their support at ALETHAUNG—BETHAUNG, and SINDAT, in operations which continued until the end of the month.

For gallantry, and devotion to duty Havs QADAR BAX, and MOHD. ALAM were both awarded the M.M. during this period.

Casualties during the month were :—
7 killed.
18 wounded.

That most difficult operation of war " A river crossing against opposition " had been successfully effected, and a beachhead firmly established, and thanks to our Div. Comd's. superb planning, the minimum of casualties. By a system of ferries of DUWK and outboard motor rafts the hours of daylight saw a continuous flow of traffic, carrying personnel, tanks, equipt. and the many vehicles which form part of a modern Division, across the river to concentrate on the East bank.

Briefly the Div. plan was to break off contact with remaining enemy forces to the East and S.E. of the bridgehead, and moving Bde. groups as fast as possible across country in a generally N. E. direction with a final objective of the important town of KYAUKSE to the South of and on the main railway line to MANDALAY.

KYAUKSE was of the utmost importance to the enemy for it lay directly on his only escape route from MANDALAY to the MEIKTILA area to the South. Success in this plan would obviously threaten the Jap Southern flank, and materially assist the advance of 19 Div. in the North, as they moved on to MANDALAY.

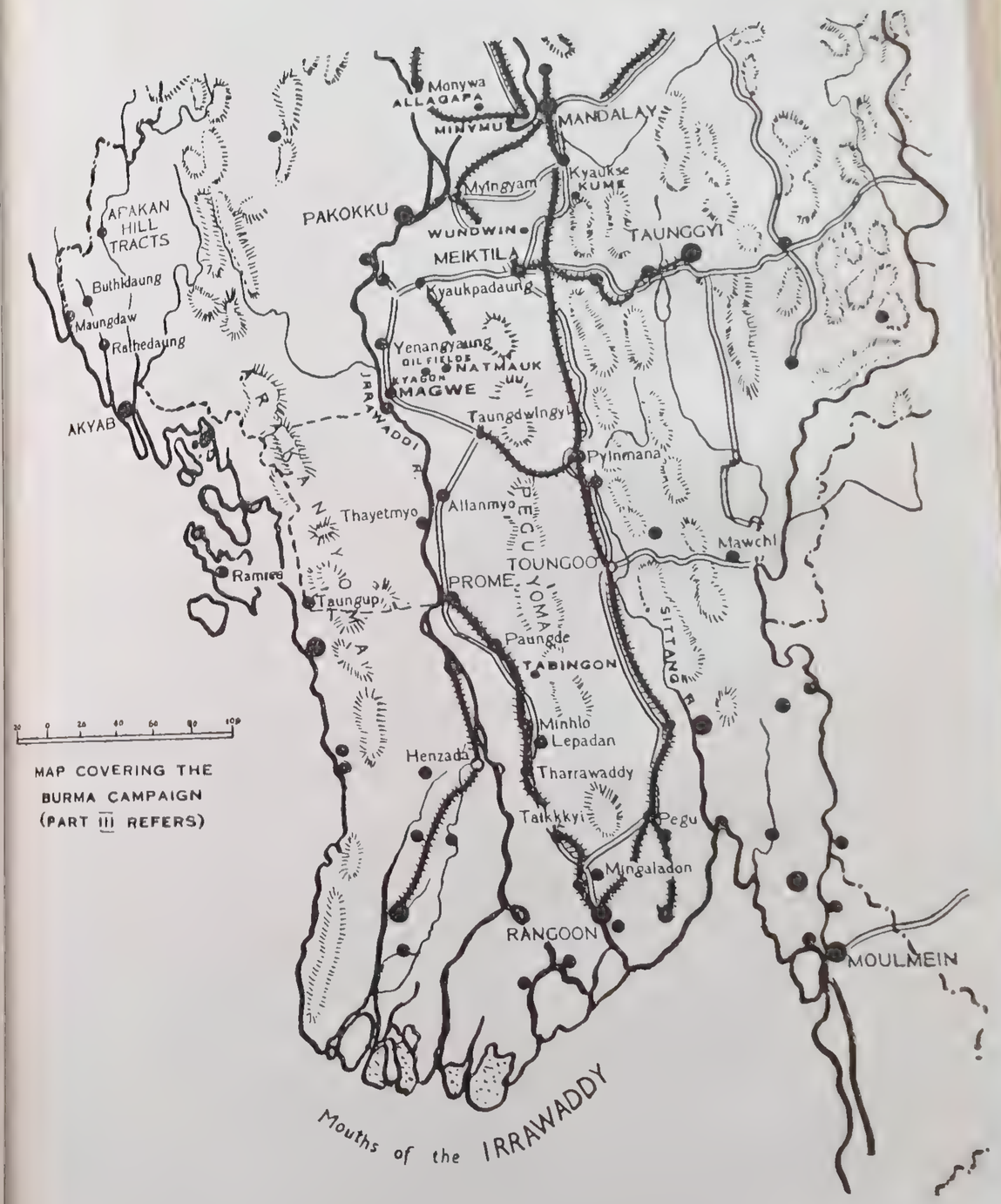
It was a bold plan, the speed of which would have to be dictated largely by the many administrative difficulties to be solved by the Q staff. The axis of the advance lay through miles of arid, waterless, and uninhabited country for this was the well known "Dry Zone" of Burma and undoubtedly lived up to its name.

Roads did not exist, and a decent bullock cart track looked upon as a luxury. Frequently tracks had to be made by vehicles themselves moving across coutry, or over fields, and the dust was indescribable. A large area near the bridgehead had been devoted to the cultivation of tobacco leaves, a source of interest, and indeed of profit to the men, for these leaves when dried made an excellent smoke for hookhas, indulgence in which had perforce been restricted owing to lack of tobacco.

While still in YEADIPPA, Lt.-Col. SYER received news that sanction had been granted for him to take 61 Days leave in Australia, and leaving Bn. H.Q. on March 7th, he crossed the river to the ALLAGAPPA airstrip to leave on the first stage of his journey. Major JOHNSON the 2nd in Command assumed command, and was later confirmed in the appointment.

CHAPTER VII

Bn. H.Q with one platoon X Coy, and later one platoon of Y Coy. which had returned on completion of its job at the embarkation point, left YEKADIPPA on March 11th for YWABO NORTH, a badly damaged village along the L of C, taking up positions on the perimeter. The following day the remaining two platoons under Lt. NOBLE moved out in an infantry role to occupy an important feature known as Pt. 486, acting as a flank guard for the L of C, and carrying out patrolling to the East. By the 17th the advance had proceeded at a terrific rate, leaving Bn. H.Q. well behind still in YWABO together with a G.P. tpt. coy. Withdrawing the platoons from Pt. 486 Bn. H.Q. moved forward to CHAUNGGWA on the 17th to Div. H.Q. area moving on from there at short notice the following day to occupy the village area of ONHMIN, from which, positions were taken up covering an important road bridge, and carrying out daily patrolling. Our comparative proximity to Y Coy. with 80 Bde. was a suitable opportunity to complete that Coy. with its platoon from Bn.



MAP COVERING THE BURMA CAMPAIGN (PART III REFERS)

H.Q., and withdrawing to Bn. H.Q., the X Coy. platoon under Capt. EALES, which had seen some stirring actions with the 9/12 F.F.R. They were loathe to be taken out of action to Bn. H.Q., although as they were soon to find out this by no means meant a rest cure.

The deficient guns had now been issued, but Jats were short, and none were available in reinforcement Camps. It had been necessary therefore to complete W Coy. by lending N.C.Os. and men from X Coy., as a result of which only two platoons could be formed in X Coy. instead of three.

The country side was beginning to change for the better Trees, with their attendant gift of shade from the blazing sun, were becoming more numerous, the area was greener, and we were approaching a well watered, and cultivated stretch of land centering around KYAUKSE. Although actually still in the Dry Zone from the point of view of annual rainfall, a most comprehensive system of canal irrigation fed from the SAMON. River had transformed the country side from barrenness to extreme fertility. Attempts by the enemy to breech the various canals, and flood the country side, restricted the movement of tanks across country, but sappers soon had the water under control.

From ONHMIN due East ran a metalled road to KYAUKSE, and in spite of years of neglect stretches still existed in reasonably good condition. Along this road 80 Bde. with Y Coy. were slowly advancing against determinal resistance—to the North of the road 32 Bde. with W Coy. operating across country on the left flank, were also driving the Japs. from village to village. 100 Bde. with Z Coy. were still in contact miles to the rear around MYOTHA and CHAUNGGWA, from which area enemy parties were withdrawing, and moving South of the main road across country towards the KYAUKSE—MEKTILA rd. Although not unduly aggressive these parties in some strength were a minor threat to the exposed Right flank. Bn. H.Q. with two Platoons of X Coy. were therefore sent out to take up positions on the SAMON River to form a firm patrol base from which to carry out active and aggressive patrolling, against these parties trying to get through to the East.

It must be confessed, that while second to none as machine gunners, our standard of patrolling while lacking nothing in enthusiasm did perhaps lack the skill of trained infantry. This was hardly surprising in as much that what little time we had had for training was fully occupied in making the men 100% proficient in the machine gun—our primary task, and previous practice in patrolling had been NIL. However on the 23rd March a patrol of X Coy. under Sub AMIR SINGH eight miles South of the camp flushed a party of twelve Japs., of whom the patrol killed five and captured one prisoner, who was brought back to camp with great pride by the patrol. This was the Bn's. first, Jap. Prisoners were few and far between and as it happened to be the CO's. birthday, he made a most acceptable present. This little success at a job other than their own had an excellent effect, and aroused considerable competition as to who should be the next to repeat the effort. The Div. Comd. personally rang up to congratulate the patrol on a good piece of work.

On the 28th. Bn. H.Q. with its two platoons crossed the river, and formed a new patrol base at SINGUN some miles further South from which patrolling continued. A Coy. of the 4/2 G.R. came under command, but were almost at once taken away to join 32 Bde.

W Coy.

We left W Coy. entrenched with the Northants on their small bridgehead across the Irrawaddy. Not a day or night passed without incident, and the machine guns were constantly in action, beating off enemy attacks, dealing with jitter parties, map shoots and harrassing shoots.

Enemy artillery continued to pour shells down on to this relatively small and completely exposed area, making any movement by day a very hazardous procedure, and one not indulged in lightly. With the remainder of the Bde. across the river after having moved round through the main bridgehead, and concentrated around KANLAN YWATHIT the by now completely isolated party had completed its task, and orders were issued for its withdrawal to the Bde. area. The evacuation of the bridgehead was duly completed on the 10th of March under enemy

shelling when platoons occupied new positions with the Bns. of the Bde. Casualties during the evacuation were 1 killed and one wounded. Thus ended a very trying period of 25 days, spent in exposed positions, subject to constant attacks, and continual shelling, added to which was blazing heat, and myriads of flies encouraged by the necessarily primitive methods of sanitation imposed on the garrison by existing conditions. In addition to the two V.C.Os. previously mentioned, many individual acts of gallantry were performed, and the Coy with Major DAVIES and Lt. HOWICK can truly say they had done a difficult job well, throughout which morale remained at an extremely high level.

A most appreciative signal was received at Bn. H.Q. from the C.O. of the Northants, thanking W Coy. for the very excellent support they had rendered, and for the magnificent manner in which they had carried it out.

As previously stated 32 Bde. were to advance across country with the intention of cutting the MANDALAY road to the North of KYAUKSE. The move started on the 11th March, with a platoon under command of each Bn. and driving the enemy before them reached the area around MINEI on the 20th, approximately parallel to, and NORTH of 80 Bde's. advance along the main road, and included the line of the railway to MANDALAY. For most of this advance normal maintainence by road was impossible, and once again supplies came from the air like "manna from heaven". Mopping up of nearby parties of enemy was carried out with machine gun support whenever required. The last train to leave MANDALAY, and reported to have contained a number of Jap. Staff Officers, just managed to get through to KYAUKSE before the leading elements of 32 Bde. reached the line. Half an hour later and they would have been "in the bag." At this stage the Div. Comd. decided to switch the Bde. from the left flank to the right, first to concentrate in the area then held by Bn. H.Q. on the bank of the R. SAMON and subsequently to move South to SINGUT W Coy. with the Bde. moved on the 23rd and by the end of the month were again in contact around NONGG-YI to the East of SINGUT. Lt. HOWICK was with the company throughout as Coy. Officer and frequently out with detached platoons.

X Coy.

The platoon of X Coy. under Capt. EALES had as stated reverted to Bn. H.Q. command on the 20th March, but from the beginning of the month had been operating with the 9/12 F.F.R. Starting around the bridgehead at YEZIN and INYA the platoon supporting the 9/12th took part in a number of sharp engagements over a period of five days, after which the platoon marched and fought with the Bn. as part of 80 Bde. across country towards KYAUKSE then many miles away to the East, during which heavy casualties were inflicted on the enemy, and considerable amount of stores, ammunition and equipt. captured including vehicles, and Arty pieces.

On the 16th the 9/12th supported by our guns attacked the important bridge across the R SAMON astride the main road, but as the leading infantry rushed the bridge covered by M.M.G. fire, the retiring enemy blew up a complete span of the bridge, and brought concentrated artillery fire on to our troops. Under cover of our own Medium Artillery fire, two companies of the F.F.R. with our platoon then forded the river our men carrying their M.M.Gs. on their shoulders in water over waist deep, and against slight opposition consolidated their positions on the EAST bank of the River.

Here again quantities of Stores, some vehicles, and a 37 m.m. anti-tank gun were captured. Enemy Artillery fire was intense, and the F.F.R. on the WEST bank suffered heavily, although the platoon was very lucky and had no casualties.

On the 18th the platoon in conjunction with an attack by the 9/12th on NYAUNGNUN fired 12000 rounds, on the southern flank in thick scrub known to contain strong bodies of enemy, and on the 20th returned to Bn. H.Q. on relief by a platoon of Y Coy.

Y Coy.

During the month this coy. less one platoon (with Bn. H.Q.) under Major HOUGH with Lt. KHEMA RAM, and Lt. HUNTSMAN operated with the Devons and 3/1st G.R, as part of 80 Bde's advance from the bridgehead to KYAUKSE. Leaving TALINGON on the 3rd they marched South and then East, through YWABO SOUTH—MAGYI, where a truck belonging to 7

platoon was blown up by an enemy mine, thence to NATTHADAW—THABYEGAN—CHAUNGWA, and on to the main KYAUKSE road, taking part in minor actions en route with parties covering the enemy's withdrawal. Here Y Coy. was completed by No. 8 platoon joining from Bn. H.Q. in relief of the X Coy. platoon. The company was lucky in having two company officers for it allowed Lt. KHEMA RAM, and Lt. HUNTSMAN to be out with a platoon each all the time. As our forces approached KYAUKSE enemy resistance increased, and particularly heavy and accurate artillery fire was being directed at our troops from a high feature which dominated the town, and all approaches to it. The 22nd was an unlucky day for the company which was supporting an attack by the Devons. A truck containing a complete M.G. sections guns, connected equipt. and stores received a direct hit from a 75 m.m. gun and burnt right out together with its valuable contents. Shortly afterwards a Jeep was also knocked out. The driver was undamaged by the shell, and dived into a ditch at the side of the road. A minute later however he was shot through the head by a sniper from a tree. Next morning Major HOUGH rang up Bn. H.Q. to report yet another Jeep disabled by shell fire this time his own, and asking for replacements. Including the truck blown up by a mine this was his fourth vehicle casualty in a short period, and although the machine guns could be replaced, our shortage of transport made replacement of the vehicles extremely difficult, and to keep the company in action adjustments had to be made within the Bn.

KYAUKSE was entered on the 30th and with the fall of this strongly contested town, 20 Div's. objective for this part of the campaign had been successfully achieved.

It is of interest here to record, that from a study of comparative tables showing casualties etc., inflicted on the enemy to date by 19 Div.—2 Div., and 20 Div., the latter had to its credit the highest count of enemy killed, the most P.Ws., and the highest "bag" of captured artillery pieces; a record of which every body in the division was justly proud.

Z Coy.

After the suceessful river crossing, and the subsequent fighting around the bridgehead Z Coy. (Major Squier - Capt Wood - Lt.

DIDAR SINGH and Lt. C. R. SINGH) with 100 Inf. Bde. took up new positions around KALAYA with platoons at SIMBYGON and PAGODA area to the EAST of YWABO SOUTH. One section was sent with a detachment of 13th F.F.R. to occupy Pt. 252, the position later taken over by X Coy. from Bn. H.Q. Apart from an attack supported by our guns put in by the Borders on to the village of THAGYIN and the action to clear PAGODA area, no incidents of any great interest occured in this period, a welcome change from the activities of the previous month. 100 Bde. was given the task of capturing MYOTHA a large village on the Jap. L. of C., and at the junction of several important roads. This was successfully effected on the 14th, our platoons moving under command of the Infantry Bns. Capt. WOOD with 10 platoon were under command of the Borders, who, when the Bde. moved forward to MYOTHA, carried out a wide movement covering the right flank of the Bde., clearing up pockets of Japs still in the area, and eventually joining up with the Bde. at CHAUNGGWA on the 20th. At this time as previously related the advance towards KYAUKSE was going well further to the EAST, and it was decided that 100 Bde. organised into a strong mobile column with Armoured cars and tanks, and infantry in M.T. supported by Artillery would make a surprise dash to the SOUTH and EAST with WUNDWIN on the KYAUKSE—MEKTILA road as its objective. By so doing it was hoped to trap any enemy escaping from KAYUKSE to the SOUTH and to link up with 17 Div. then fighting towards MEKTILA.

Following the armoured column on foot came the remainder of the brigade group including Z Coy., to occupy and exploit the gains of the armoured column, and to keep open the vulnerable L of C. This move took the enemy completely by surprise, and the mobile column moved so fast that it was at times difficult to know just where they were. After an exhilarating dash during which they killed large numbers of the enemy, and captured many guns and material, WUNDWIN was reached and duly occupied, and contact made with 17 Div., while the marching column followed at the best pace they could make. No. 12 platoon with Lt. DIDAR SINGH moved to WUNDWIN on the 24th; 10 platoon with Capt. WOOD under command of 23 Mtn. Regt. occupied

MYITTHA, while Coy. H.Q. and No. 11 platoon took up positions in and around KUME some 30 miles to the NORTH of WUNDWIN. On the 30th No. 12 platoon rejoined Coy. H.Q. at KUME, followed early in April by No. 10 platoon.

During the month casualties in the Bn. were 5 killed and 18 wounded, a remarkably low figure, considering the many actions in which our machine guns had taken part, and the heavy toll taken of the enemy.

Once again 20 Div. had successfully concluded a wide flanking movement, covering well over one hundred miles mainly through some of the most difficult country in Burma, and undoubtedly contributing materially to the capture of MANDALAY by 19 Div. With the Div. along the main road from KYAUKSE in the SOUTH, any enemy escaping from MANDALAY found their normal escape route completely denied to them, and had to abandon all M.T., and heavy equipment and take to the difficult, and for them treacherous hilly country of the Shan States, where they were to be continually harrassed by those staunch and loyal hillmen.

In this well watered, and pleasant area the complete division was allowed a well earned and needed six day rest.

Bn. H.Q. with X Coy. had moved to INGON on the MANDALAY road on the 2nd April, holding the EAST face of the Div. H.Q. perimeter where there was abundant shade, and a large canal on our doorstep. Coys. remained out in their brigade areas, from which as many men as possible were allowed to make a trip in M.T. to MANDALAY during the rest period. This once delightful city presented a doleful appearance, and its destructions appeared complete, first from the devastating Japanese blitz from the air in 1942, and subsequently from the frequent visits of the R.A.F.

Everywhere the outlines of once proud buildings met the eye, outlines no longer even and symmetrical, but jagged and torn, bearing mute witness to the tumult that had passed. Roofless and windowless they lay bare to the sardonic gaze of the sun by day, and to the inquisitive eyes of myriads of stars by night. Here and there small parties of people could be seen disconsolately searching amongst the rubble of what had presumably once been

their home, fore-runners of those other thousands even then on the roads, leading back to the city, in bullock carts, on bicycles and on flat feet. Inevitably our men found their way to the bazar area around the clock tower, but to meet only with disappointment, for although the vendors, and the little shops were there, it could hardly be called "business as usual." Stock consisted almost entirely of a few mouldy cheroots. depressed looking bunches of bananas, and occassionally a stack of sugar cane, all at fantastic prices, and little money changed hands.

A tour of Fort Dufferin, followed the climb by the keener members, up the hundreds of steps leading to the ancient Pagoda at the top of MANDALAY Hill. On the way out of the city, interest was raised at the sight of what had been the railway station. "Had been" adequately describes it, for it was very obvious that the station, and its environs had received even more attention, than the worst damaged areas inside the city. This opportunity to visit MANDALAY towards which they had marched and fought for three months was greatly appreciated and full advantage of it was taken by all ranks of the Bn.

General Sir Oliver Leese the C-in-C Allied Land Forces visited the division during its rest and spoke glowingly of its achievements.

Speculation on the Division's next task became the chief topic, and though opinions within the Bn., differed regarding the method and route, it was unanimously agreed that RANGOON would be the next stop. The average sepoy was surprisingly well informed regarding events, both of local importance and in other theatres. Eventually the news every body was waiting for came through, and the school of thought which had backed an advance straight down the main Rangoon road were wrong. RANGOON however was the objective, but 20 Div. were to move via MEKTILA due West to ZAYETKON and linking up with units of 7 Div. from the oilfield area around Mt. POPA, then SOUTH across country towards TAUNGDWINGI, with one Bde. to MAGWE on the Irrawaddy. From TAUNGDWINGI ran the road connecting up with the main road to PROME via ALLANMYO, and this was to become the main axis for our

further advance SOUTH to RANGOON. Needless to say the thought uppermost in everbody's mind was, could we get to Rangoon before the other Divisions of 4 Corps moving down the MEKTILA—RANGOON Rd.? Any predictions at this early stage however were premature, for it involved an advance of over 300 miles, partly through difficult country with bad communications, and water supplies inadequate, against opposition, the degree of which would of course largely decide the speed of our advance.

However there were hopes that our West, and Southwards move would completely surprise the enemy, and give us an initial advantage at least as far as TAUNDWINGI. Events justified these hopes, and our sudden appearance, with its threat both to RANGOON, and to the large enemy forces attempting to withdraw from the oilfields, and along the WEST bank of the Irrawaddy must have seriouly disconcerted, the already disorganised Japanese higher commanders and their staff.

CHAPTER VIII

Bn. H.Q. and X Coy. moved from INGON to a temporary camp site at M.S. 5 on the ZAYETKON rd. West of MEKTILA on 11th April arriving in the late afternoon of the same day. Hardly had the camp been prepared, than the sky darkened, and to the accompaniment of strong winds, thunder and lightning, a deluge descended, transforming in a few minutes an orderly camp into chaos. The few officers tents were torn from their fastenings tarpauline head cover for the men blown right across the camp and trenches filled with water. Every man and his kit and bedding was soaked, and next morning the camp area looked as though it had been struck by a cyclone.

On the 16th and 17th, Bn. H.Q. and X Coy. moved through ZAYETKON to KANGYGON passing through desolate and uninhabited country on a par with that experienced after leaving the bridgehead. The local PHOONGY CHAUNG area was allotted, as our camp which with its many Buddhas made a pleasant camp for a few days.

These Pagodas, and PHOONGY CHAUNGS, found in every village in Burma had become common place, but the men could

never understand the necessity for their being, and considered the often lavish expenditure and labour involved, a complete waste.

From NATMAUK the road to MAGWE branched off Westwards, along which 80 Bde. were advancing. It was known that large parties of enemy from the oilfield area were attempting to escape southwards, and crossing this road in the vicinity of KYAGAN a small village half way along this road, moving at night, and laying up by day. As 80 Bde. pushed on to MAGWE, leaving KYAGAN empty, these Jap. parties were able to cross the road with comparative immunity, and of course by their presence, constituted a threat to the 80 Bde. L of C back to NATMAUK. To prevent enemy movement Southwards and safeguard the L of C, Tac' Bn. H.Q. and the two platoons of X Coy. with a minimum of tpt. was sent out to form a strong patrol base around KYAGON, and from there to carry out active daylight patrolling to obtain information of enemy parties, and to lay ambushes by night. "B" echelon and all transport to move to NATMAUK with Div. H.Q., and to maintain Bn. H.Q. party from there. On the 18th Bn. H.Q. and two platoons moved to KYAGON, where a suitable site was chosen under a clump of Mango trees just West of the village, and the remainder of the day spent in digging in, and preparing the position, which with eight machine guns around the perimeter, and an excellent field of fire all around was extremely strong, and from which we could confidently take on all comers. In this part of the country trees were few and far between, and the hot weather at its height. The unexpected presence therefore of this large grove of mango trees, noted for their coolth was more than could be hoped for, and gave us the coolest camp we had experienced for months.

Patrolling programmes were laid on and work commenced at once, and will be dealt with under X Coy. Just before "Stand to" on the evening of the 24th, several villagers appeared, and by a very realistic show of pantomime, managed to convey information to the effect that they had captured three Japs., cut the head off two of them, and still held one prisoner. Ambushes were being laid that night, and apart from a few personnel of Bn. H.Q. only enough men to man the guns had been left in camp. However a patrol of sorts was scraped together consisting of "odds and sods," and

under command of the Police L/Nk set off in the gathering dark to investigate.

They took with them a large wad of captured Japanese notes with which to reward the locals should their story be true, while as a safeguard, one of the Burmans was kept behind in camp as a hostage. He poor fellow was, judging by his frightened look quite convinced that he was to meet his end, and after an hour he was allowed to go, richer for his short detention by a handsome reward of Jap. notes. The patrol returned some four hours later, having found the story quite true, and one Jap. securely bound awaiting their arrival. On the way back to camp he made a determined bid to escape and was shot. The villagers had for some time been most cooperative both in bringing in information, and in killing any small parties of Japs. who came to their villages for food. This change of heart however only became apparant when it was obvious that the days of the Jap. rule in Burma were over, and there is little doubt that in 1942 numbers of our men had met the same end, as was now being meted out to the Japs.

On the 25th Bn. H.Q. moved to TAUNDWINGI, having been deprived of its two remaining platoons which had been placed under command of ROCOL, and the 2/8 Punjab, and on the 30th moved into the Div. H.Q. perimeter at YWATAUNG, just SOUTH of ALANMYO.

W Coy.

W Coy. with the remainder of 32 Bde. made the most of their rest period from 1st April to 9th April, including cleaning up, reorganising etc. By good work on the part of the Q.M., they had already been issued with new clothes, and were thus able to parade for the C-in-C ALFSEA, looking very spic and span. Their appearance was favourably commented on by both the C-in-C, and the Div. Comd.

32 Bde. including W Coy. received orders to form a mechanised column to act as the spear head of the next advance, with the object of capturing TAUNDWINGI with the utmost speed, before the enemy were able to react to this surprise move, which began on 10 April. The column advanced rapidly via THISON—ZAYETGON KANYIGON and NATMAUK to

TAUNGWINDGI which was reached six days later by the main body. Only minor opposition had been encountered, and a platoon supporting the 4/2nd G. R. successfully shot up an enemy M.T. convoy on the night of the 15th. On the 18th and 19th the M.M.Gs. sunk several boatloads of enemy moving down the Irrawaddy. From the 23rd to the 27th, one platoon under Lt. HOWICK with guns and ammunition on bullock carts moved South with the 4/2nd G.R., and by the end of the month the coy. had concentrated NORTH of ALLANMYO on the RANGOON road. During this very rapid advance only sporadic attempts at resistance had been made, and it appeared that the enemy was too disorganised to undertake any coordinated effort.

X Coy.

While in the Bn. H.Q. camp WEST of MEKTILA the company sent out night ambushes on two nights running in the hope of destroying enemy parties who were believed to be mining the causeway at M.S. 12, but no enemy were seen.

Beginning on the 19th April from KYAGON under orders of Tac Bn. H.Q., the two platoons of X Coy., in addition to forming a firm base, carried out extensive day-light patrolling, and night ambushes, on likely lines of enemy approach.

Lack of interpretors for patrolling was a difficulty, for contact with villagers was a valuable source of information. One of the Bn. H.Q. signallers had before the war, been employed in Burma, selling tooth-brushes, soap, etc., during which he had acquired a fair knowledge of the language and his services were used to the full in accompanying patrols, and interrogating villagers.

On the 21st one patrol contacted and captured a party of ten armed members of the INA and brought them back to camp.

In the early hours of the morning of the 22nd a small listening post of six men just NORTH of KYAGON was surrounded and captured by a party of 7 officers and 50 other ranks of the INA led by a Capt. It was a filthy night, absolutely pitch dark, with heavy rain, and a strong wind, rendering visibility and hearing absolutely NIL, and the party of INA were on top of the post, and all around it, before our men even became aware of their presence. One sepoy was shot and bayoneted by the officer, and another managed

to escape back to camp in the confusion. The remainder were taken prisoner, and marched away with the enemy. At day break a force of about 30 men under Major EALES was sent out from camp to follow up the enemy party, and were reinforced by a platoon of Infantry from NATMUK. The enemy were tracked to a village some twelve miles away, where they were laying up for the day. The village was surrounded, and preparations made for an attack, but the enemy had had enough and surrendered with their arms to a man. Only one man of X Coy. from the captured post was still in their hands, the remainder having escaped, and in due course found their way back to camp. The force eventually reached camp about 21-30 hrs. that night complete with 7 officers and 50 other ranks as prisoners. They looked an unhappy bunch of scarecrows, but were a disciplined force and fully armed with rifles, L.M.Gs., and a 2" Mortar and as such capable of making a nuisance of themselves.

On the 24th a report from villagers indicated the presence of a party of 1 officer and 24 Japs. at KOYBININ. A patrol was sent out to contact them, and having opened up with small arms fire and grenades the enemy surrendered. It was a disappointment to find that although the villagers report was correct in numbers they were all Indians and members of the INA.

That night a strong ambush was laid for a party of 200 Japs with 60 bullock carts, but although every precaution was taken to ensure secrecy, they must have received information of our presence, and instead of continuing their move SOUTH as had been anticipated, they carried out a wide chucker to the WEST and then South, completely evading the ambush.

Bn. H.Q. and X Coy joined the "B" echelon at TAUNDWINGI on the 25th from which the two platoons moved out to come under command of ROCOL and the 9/12 F.F.R.

Y Coy.

80 Bdes. task was to move behind 32 Bde. as far as NATMAUK, and then strike WEST to capture MAGWE, an important town on the Irrawaddy, and containing two large airstrips which had been in constant use by the Japanese. On the 12th the Bde. moved off in M.T., but leaving Y Coy tempo-

rarily behind owing to the failure of troop carrying M.T. to arrive. On the 15th transport was still awaited, and Major HOUGH decided to Ferry the coy as far as MEKTILA, in the hope of obtaining the necessary transport there. The first trip moved off, and later in the day, returned together with sufficient transport for the remainder of the Coy which arrived eventually at NATMAUK on 17th April, just in time for the move westwards. Platoons were alloted to Bns, and moved with them by stages to MAGWE which. after a brief battle during which 100 Japs were killed, was captured, together with a lot of enemy equipment and several heavy calibre AA guns in good condition. A detachment of a Japanese field ambulance unit had just arrived in MAGWE from the NORTH, and when captured complete the Doctor in charge, was most indignant at not being warned by his superiors of the Bdes. impending arrival! On the night of the 23rd one platoon with the 4/17 Dogra were in positions covering the road running into the town from the NORTH. At 2345 hrs. an enemy M.T. column drove straight on to the position, and to their surprise were met by a volley of small arms fire, M.M.G. fire, plus a few rounds from anti tank gunners, whose presence in the area had not even been expected by the Japs. Several of the leading vehicles were knocked out, and the occupants killed. One vehicle attempted a mad dash through the position and was quickly ditched by the fire of our M.M.Gs. The driver was killed, and an L.M.G. in good condition taken from the vehicle by our men. Six Japs attempting to get round the position were also killed by our right section.

At dawn on the 22nd Hav. MOHD. SHAFFI from the Coy. H. Q. perimeter, saw a boat containing two armed Japs ap. proaching from the West bank. He held his fire until the boat had grounded in front of his position, and two more very surprised Japs were " in the bag."

Quite a number of Japs were known to be on the opposite bank to MAGWE, some of whom had escaped from that place before its capture, others part of a force trying to withdraw SOUTH under pressure from units of 7 Division. It soon became very obvious that they also had some artillery, which proceeded to pump shells into MAGWE from very short range. The Bde.

H.Q. perimeter part of which was held by Y Coy. H.Q. came in for particularly heavy attention, and for a time became a most unhealthy spot to be in.

Major FRANCIS who had just reported to Bn. H.Q. at KYAGON fresh, and blooming from a spell of home leave, was detailed to take over command of Y Coy. from Major HOUGH, who was being transferred as the Bn. representative with the 7/9th Jat Regt. at SAHARANPUR, in place of Major THOMPSON who had recently joined the Bn. The exchange was duly effected on the 24th when the C.O. drove Major FRANCIS to MAGWE. being saluted on arrival by a salvo from the Jap guns.

From MAGWE, the Bde. moved South along the banks of the Irrawaddy. sweeping the area to clean up any remaining parties of enemy. Only bullock carts tracks existed, and the move had to be made on a mule, and bullock cart basis, all M.T., including that of the Coy. being sent round by road via TAUNDWINGI. Pack transport and carts were very limited, and as it was thought M.Gs. were unlikely to be required, they were loaded on to the M.T. and sent round under Lt. HUNTSMAN, leaving the Coy. with small arms only. For the series of marches that followed Y Coy. found themselves in a new role, that of escorting the long train of mules and bullock carts, a slow and not over interesting job for even the least of imaginative minds.

In this capacity the coy. less one platoon marched 16 miles on the 25th, and 13 miles the next day to MYINGUN. Here their beloved machine guns caught up with them, having moved from TAUNDWINGI across country by an existing track. Mules were allotted for the guns, the M.T. returning to harbour the same day. With the guns on pack the company then marched for five days with the brigade, averaging about 10 miles a day until they reached INGON on the main PROME road, at the end of the month.

Z Coy.

For the early days of the month the company less one platoon under Capt. WOOD which remained at MYITHHA until the 3rd— concentrated in KUME for their rest period, enjoing themselves by bathing in a stream running close to their camp, with occassional breaks for eating and sleeping!

100 Bde. was ordered to move by stages to TAUNDWINGI following the route taken by the remainder of the division, starting on the 10th. The available M.T. had been largely used up in maintaining and transporting the other two brigades, and 100 Bde. including Z Coy. had to march. They footslogged along the hot and dusty roads halting and taking up perimeter positions each night. eventually reaching TAUNDWINGI twelve days later.

Here the Bde. was formed into a mobile striking force with tanks and armoured cars, a main body, and rear guard. Their task was to move through 32 Bde., and capture first ALLANMEYO, and then the important city of PROME. The number of heavy automatic weapons with the armoured vehicles made our M.Gs. unnecessary, and consequently Coy. H.Q. and two platoons movee with the main body during the first stages of the advance, ond platoon moving with the rear guard.

ALLANMEYO was captured on the 25th after a stiff fight, and the advance continued to PROME, one platoon having joined the 13 F.F.R. then the leading Bn. of the Bde., and another platoon came under command of the 1/1st G.R.

Bn. H.Q. now for the first time with all of its companies out under command stayed at YWATAUNG until the 5th May when it moved to PROME, with Div. H.Q.

The long Burma monsoon had started, and although not yet fully in its stride rain was very frequent. Overlooking the town itself, and the Irrawaddy lay the European houses—or what was left of them—built up on a series of high features, from which it was possible to obtain an excellent view of the whole area, and what was more important the benefit of whatever breeze that was blowing either from the river to the WEST, or from the open country to the East. The general effect of this small residential area was that of a miniature hill station and before the war must have been extremely pleasant. The Japs. too had evidently found the area to their liking, but in the three years or so of their stay had done nothing to maintain the condition in which they found it. Most of the houses were in a bad state of repair, and anything but water proof, and the unfettered jungle had made great strides in reclaiming the area as its own.. Bn. H.Q. was allotted a double storied house right on top of one of the small features, and after a

little work and a lot of cleaning, it made a very comfortable Mess. Being within easy reach of the various brigades, officers from Coys were frequently able to call in, for a meal and a drink.

Although the fighting had by no means finished, the end could at this time, be said to be in sight. RANGOON was still some 180 miles away but this in comparison to mileages already covered was not particularly great. The problem of maintenance however was to have the last word in the final operations. A large airstrip had been built at ALLANMYO to which supplies for the division were flown. This however was some distance back, and could not be used for maintenance much forward of the existing positions of the leading troops of 100 Bde. around PAUNGDE. For a further advance therefore supply dropping would have to be resorted to, but owing to commitments elsewhere it was learnt that it would only be possible for one brigade to be so supplied.

The Div, Commander therefore decided to form 32 Bde. into a mobile column, together with tanks, and for it to pass through 100 Bde., and advance with all speed to Rangoon. W Coy. was to accompany the Bde. At this stage it was still thought that 20 Div. had a good chance of being the first into the city, and the word " RANGOON " with likely dates was the favourite topic of conversation amongst all ranks. It was known that 4 Corps were making good progress along the PEGU Road, and that it would be a close finish between us.

About the middle of the month came the bald announcement that units of 15 Corps had entered the city from the Sea. It was somewhat of an anti climax, after all the speculation that had been going on amongst ourselves, and caused some disappointment. However there was still a lot to be done, both to the NORTH around the EAST bank of the Irrawaddy, in the thick jungle EAST of the Divisional L of C, and SOUTH from PAUNGDE to RANGOON. Enemy in strength, although disorganised and badly knocked about had to be dealt with in each of the areas. Large forces were withdrawing SOUTH on the WEST bank of the river, with the intention of crossing the river, and escaping Eastwards. As parties attempted the crossing in country boats from MAGWE southwards, they learnt at heavy cost of our

presence. This resulted in a large concentration of several thousand on the WEST bank, roughly in an area between ALLANMYO and PROME, faced with crossing the river at all costs and escaping EAST. or being trapped between 20 Div. and 7 Div advancing down the WEST bank from the NORTH,

All available forces within the Division were therefore ordered to positions covering all likely crossing places covering nearly a sixty mile stretch of the river. Crossings were attempted at night at different places, but the enemy soon realised that these indiscriminate crossings were doomed to failure. He therefore decided to make a co-ordinated effort, by seizing a bridgehead, building it up over a period of days, and then to attempt a break out in strength to the hills in the EAST. The site chosen for the bridgehead was in dense jungle, with small hills, in which it was extremely difficult to get at him, or to obtain information of his movements either by ground. or air reconnaisance. This plan achieved some measure of success, in that a number of them did manage to get through to the YOMAS, although at heavy cost.

This then was the general picture during the last half of May. The Bn. was split up over the full length of the cordon, and we will now follow their movements in more detail.

On the 29th Bn. H.Q. moved from PROME to its last camp in this campaing at a village called TAIKKYI 50 miles from RANGOON.

W Coy.

This company formed part of the 32 Bde., column to advance on RANGOON. Remnants of the RANGOON garrison after the fall of that town had pushed up the PROME road with the intention of escaping eastwards into the PEGU YOMAS, having discovered that their main escape route along the PEGU road was barred to them by 4 Corps. Joining up with these forces were other parties pulling out from the Arakan, and the BASSEIN area, the whole forming a fairly considerable, and mixed force, including soldiers, airmen, sailors, and even comfort girls. The latter were reported to have shaven their heads and donned Jap uniform,

The enemy plan was to fight delaying actions against 32 Bds., taking full advantage of the many large river, and railway bridges

which they blew up as they retired. Heavy rains had flooded the country, and made diversions around these damaged bridges, difficult, and considerably slowed up the advance.

Up to the 7th May the Company moved with 32 Bde., only one platoon getting a shoot at an enemy held village. On the 8th as part of KITCOL Coy. H.Q. and two platoons moved off Eastwards to capture the villages of TANBINGON and ONDAW some twenty miles away to the EAST of the road. One Platoon remaining under command of the 9/14th Punjab. TANBINGON was captured on the 10th and two days later Coy. H.Q. with one platoon rejoined Bde., H.Q. leaving one platoon at TABINGON with the 4/2 GR. From then until the end of May the Coy., moved southwards as the advance progressed until THARRAWADDY was reached. On several occasions guns were sent out to form ambushes, although no enemy were contacted. The platoon with the 9/14th passed to the command of a Gurkha Bn., preparatory to supporting a Bn., attack on to a strongly held enemy position astride the large OKPU CHAUNG. The 9/14th were to attack from the flank supported by our guns from the front together with the Gurkha Bn. The Jap however eluded the trap by withdrawing to the East the night preceeding the attack. The assumption from this surprise withdrawal was that the bulk of the main enemy force had by them achieved a get away towards the YOMAS. THARRAWADDY the Centre of a large district before the war remained the base for W Coy., until they reverted to Bn., command on the 26th June. From their H.Q., located in a large house capable of holding the complete company, platoons were frequently sent out in support of infantry dealing with odd parties of Japs. On two occasions SAGYAUNG was the scene of operations within three days, and well over 20000 rounds were fired into it by our guns. On the second occasion a Jap. patrol worked round, and cut the road from behind the gun position. Stiff fighting followed before the road was cleared, and the platoon allowed to return to H.Q.

Although the Bde. did not reach RANGOON, by the time they had caught up with forces of 26 Div. advancing, NORTH, the forward elements were within 50 miles of the city at the village of TAIKKYI.

The return to Bn. command on the 26th June, ended an association with 32 Bde. and its battalions of six months of continuous operations.

Major Davies had left the company at THARRAWADDY to proceed on leave in India, leaving Lt. Howick in charge. While in India orders came through sanctioning Maj. Davies his home leave in lieu of repatriation, and that was to be the last we saw of him for about six months.

X Coy.

Coy. H.Q. and one platoon remained with the 9/12th F.F.R., while the other platoon formed part of a special column known as ROCOL.

During this period the platoons took part in several actions, that with ROCOL sinking several boatloads of enemy crossing the river.

The other platoon operating from PROME supported attacks by the F.F.R.

On the 29th May the company rejoined Bn. H.Q. at TAIKKYI and took up monsoon quarters.

Y Coy.

With platoons under command of the Bns. of 80 Bde. the company moved south from the area of M.S. 202 concentrating finally at HMAWBI M.S. 32 which was reached on the 22nd May. Two platoons were still out one with the Dogras at PAUNGDALE, and the other with the Hyderabads operating around WETTIGAN and AUKCHAING EAST of the main road, and opposite to the main Jap. break out area away to the North. The former platoon rejoined at Bn. H.Q. on the 26th. The latter platoon with the Hyderabads took part in some spirited actions against parties of the escaping enemy some of whom were definately on the offensive again, presumably with a view to preventing our forces closing the escape route. At one time the position was completely surrounded, and the L of C through thickly wooded country cut. Maintenance for this period had to be by air drop.

This platoon with Lt. Huntsman remained out until the end of May when it was released to Bn. H.Q. at TAIKKYI.

Z Coy.

By the 3rd of May the Coy., arrived in SCHEDAUNG from which, platoons took up positions covering likely enemy approaches on the bank of the river, and carried out several shoots at enemy concentrations on the WEST bank.

On the 9th one platoon under Capt. Wood crossed the Irrawaddy from MYOTHA and took up positions with the 4/10th GR., around TATKIN and later to PADAUNG.

The role of this force force was to prevent any enemy movement further South, and to deal with parties trying to get away from the Arakan. At this point the only road from that area joined up with the river. It was thought at one time that the West African division operating from the Arakan would eventually link up with our forces at this point. This however did not happen.

On one occasion when our aircraft were carrying out a bombing and strafing raid in this area Capt. Wood, and men of one section had a narrow escape. He was sitting with the section under a shed, when one of our aircraft dropped a heavy bomb by mistake on to a building not more than 30 yds. away. Very fortunately nobody was hurt although the roof of the shed was damaged and they felt the full effect of the blast.

Coy. H.Q. moved with Bde., H.Q. to PAUNGDE, and later on to LETPANDAN, platoons remaining under command of Infantry Bns.

On the 7th June one platoon with a company of the 1/1st GR. proceeded by train from LETPANDON to THERRAWAW Rly. station, covering the comparatively short journey at an unsteady ten miles an hour! The train itself consisted of a very old and decrepit engine, and salvaged trucks. all of which showed scars of the many bombing attacks to which they had been subjected.

On the 9th June the platoon crossed the river to the large town of HENZADA and occupied the Mission School. On several occasions the guns moved out in motor launches with the Gurkhas to clear up areas around YWATHITKON containing armed Burmese Dacoits.

Burma generally has always had trouble from bands of Dacoits, but in the past their weapons were antiquated and unreliable. The war however had changed all this, for there had been ample opportunity for obtaining arms and ammunition mostly Japanese, and parties were terrorizing the country side armed with light automatics, rifles, and even grenades. The suppression of these bands will take time, and will undoubtedly be the sources of major headaches to the Burma administration, and of worry to peaceful villagers, especially in outlying districts. A number of false reports of the presence of Japs. in different areas were thought to be due to the desire of the villagers for troops to be sent to the area, and thus keep away any of these bands of robbers.

At the end of the June, with the exception of this platoon, the company was concentrated at LETPANDAN.

TAIKKYI the battalion's monsoon station was a fair sized village with the usual mixed population of Burman. Chinese and Indian, and from all outward appearances had not suffered by the Jap occupation. People seemed to be well fed, and certainly well dressed, compared to their less fortunate compatriates in the North of Burma. Adequate accommodation for the complete Bn. could only have been made available by requisitioning a number of private houses, but by the building of a complete company area of Bashas, plus the local school buildings and Police lines only three private houses had to be taken over. The ejected occupants were found other accommodation by the S.D.O., any furniture or fittings left behind, carefully listed, and a generous rent paid by Govt. for the hire of the buildings. Our attitude was appreciated by the villagers, and one in fact remarked on the difference between our methods, and those of the Japs, which had been merely a curt order to "get out".

CHAPTER IX

It had been anticipated that by the end of the first week of June the Battalion would have concentrated in TAIKKYI, but although X & Y Coys. arrived, W and Z had to remain out with their brigades, owing to the existence of roving bands of Japs and

depredations of dacoits, against whom action had to be taken After clearing up the Bn. area in TAIKKYI it was intended to reorganise ourselves, and commence hard training for the next operations outside Burma. To all intents and purposes the village was to be a peace station, with only the minimum of essential duties, freedom of movement, and all the lights we wanted at night. The fact that such lights consisted only of the "Hurricane Battie," did not in any way lessen our appreciation of their unrestricted use, after months of partial, and sometimes complete black-outs at night.

However our peace was soon to be interrupted, for on the morning of the 18th Jun. information was received that a party of Japs. had entered a village 3 miles from TAIKKYI, tied up all inhabitants, and forced one of them to give them details of the layout of our forces in TAIKKYI, with particular reference to H. Qs,, and the living quarters of senior officers. Needless to say the senior officers concerned took a poor view of this latter piece of information, much to the amusement of those more junior, who had suddenly discovered a previously unknown enthusiasm for their comparatively lowly ranks! Gurkhas went out to deal with the party, but no contact was made. In the Bn. area, defence positions were prepared and additional precautions arranged for the night. One of our isolated houses had been temporarily allotted to Bn. H. Q., personal most of whom were non-combatants. This disadvantage however was overcome by the presence in the Q.M. store of two machine guns which were duly mounted, one in front, and one at the back of the house, and manned by the Q.M. and his Jemedar Q.M.!

At about 2 a.m. the following morning, the Gurkhas occupying the railway station area, just across the road from the Bn. lines were fired upon by light automatics and small arms fire plus grenade dischargers from positions taken up by the enemy at very close range to the Gurkha H.Q. The Bn. "stood to" for about two hours while the fire fight with the Gurkhas continued, but no attempt was made against our perimeter. The enemy party were eventually forced to withdraw by the Gurkhas, although not without some casualties to themselves.

The effect of this attack, insignificent in itself, was to cause the village area to return to an operational basis. A curfew was imposed, and active patrolling carried out in all directions. Large numbers of Japs were known to be living in the YOMAS some miles to the East, and this had presumably been a detachment of them foraging for food. Houses had been ransacked during the attack, and several villagers killed by the Japs. They however captured one prisoner who was duly handed over to Bn. H.Q. at dawn.

On the 8th July as it was considered that the area was clear of Japs, patrolling ceased, and conditions returned to normal.

The PEGU YOMAS have previously been referred to, and were beginning to come more, and more into the news.

They consist of a range of hills rising from the plain around PEGU, and running NORTH to beyond PROME, thereby forming an effective barrier between the two main routes into RANGOON, with the PROME road on the WEST and the MEKTILA—PEGU road on the EAST. Features in this range rose in places to over 2500 ft. and throughout its length was covered in virgin jungle in many parts impenetrable. It was malarious in the extreme, and a home of bush typhus. Communication from WEST to EAST apart from a few rough jungle tracks were nil and it is not surprising that this unsavoury stretch was almost completely uninhabited.

However the remnants of a defeated army cannot pick and chose their terrain, and it was into the YOMAS that the large forces of Japs. which had escaped our net from the NORTH, and WEST were concentrating prior to attempting to cross the PEGU Road., towards the EAST. Once across the SITTANG River they would be back into Japanese held territory. But they were not to be allowed to escape so easily. From TOUNGOO southwards to PEGU, a large force of all arms of 4 Corps had taken up positions astride the main road, forming an almost continuous cordon to foil any attempt at the break through which was bound to come. Conditions for the enemy in the YOMAS must have been indescribable. They were completely cut off: short of food, and ammunition: harrassed by our aircraft, and long

range artillery, malaria, and typhus had taken a heavy toll, and "beri beri" was rife amongst the remainder.

Last but not least, they had to contend with the full force of the Monsoon. and apart from the misery of continual exposure to torrential rain, the flat paddy field country from the hills to the Sittang river had been turned into one vast lake, in many places several feet deep.

Seldom can any force have found themselves in a less enviable position. They were caught literally like rats in a trap.

20 Div. strung along the THARRAWADDY—HMAWBI road, although some 150 miles away from the anticipated break through front were to have a share in the final hounding down of the Japs. in Burma, many of whom owed their present plight to the divisions rapid outflanking movements. Three Infantry battalions, and this Bn. were detailed to move by M.T. to come under command of 4 Corps to thicken up the cordon on the Pegu road.

The Bn. received orders to move to PEGU in the first place, on the 16th July. Z Coy. still out with 100 Bde. was to follow independently on the 17th. At PEGU the Bn. was ordered to stay the night at the village of DAIK-U (M.S. 86), leave one company at DAIK-U under 48 Bde. one company to report to 63 Bde. at PENWEGON; Bn. H.Q. to be located at PENWEGON with H.Q. 17 Div. and one company to proceed to the area around NYAUNGBINTHA M.S. 136 to come under command of a special force from 19 Div. known as FLEWFORCE, commanded by Brigadier Flewett. Companies were thus widely separated over nearly 60 miles of road, from NORTH to SOUTH. Owing to the normal shortage of Jats, plus the fact that a number had been sent on leave from TAIKKYI, it had been necessary to form one composite company of Jats from platoons of W and X Companies.

The Bn. was therefore operating with only three companies instead of four.

Although it was not realised at the time, this was to be our last action against the Japs, and the activities of Y and Z Coys. are therefore given in some detail. The composite company of Jats had been kept in a purely defensive role on vital points around

DAIK-U against attacks which were expected, but which did not materialise. This company therefore failed to get a shoot,

Y Coy.

During the period of operations this coy. was under command of FLEWFORCE in the area from PYU M.S. 143 to the WUN CHAONG M.S. 128, and was attached to the 1/15 Punjab and 6/15 Punjab.

On 20-7-45

5 Pls. guns at Bn. at M.S. 133¼ engaged parties of Japs in area NGANTHUAN and nala area during the day, also giving harrassing fire. Results not known.

8 Pl. in MYINBIN 9325 supported infy patrols to THINBANGIN capturing one P,W. en route.

21-7-45

One sec. of 9 Pl. under command C Coy. 6/15 Punjab were in action NORTH and NE of NYAUNGBINTHA.

They first engaged a Jap convoy of mules and bullock carts at a range of 1800 yds. dispersing it in confusion, and causing many casualties.

They then took up positions covering nearby villages which were being shelled by our Arty, shooting down the enemy as they ran from the villages.

After carrying their guns for over 6 miles targets were found in some long grass containing hiding enemy. Results could not be verified as the had to return to base before dark.

32 counted bodies were credited to these guns, but actual casualties must have been at least double.

22-7-45

No. 2 sec. with D Coy. 6/15 Punjab carried out an offensive patrol NYAUNGBINTHA to KYUNGIN 9431—THITPAT 9630—SEIKTAUNGIN 9728—INBINTHA 0031 and back to base. 3 Japs. walking across a paddy field were killed near THITPAT by the guns.

During the night at SEIKTANGIN our guns opened up in conjuction with Arty. on a party of enemy coming from the SOUTH.

23-7-45

A Sec. of 9 P1 fired a large number of belts into THAZI 9932, together with our Arty. About 100 bodies were counted. Of a party of 15 who attempted to break out of the village 12 were killed by our guns.

The Section carried gun and amn. a total of 12 miles, 25 more bodies were credited to our guns during this period.

23-7-45

A Section of 8 P1 during a night ambush at KYUAKTAING 9334 killed 30 Japs. and captured six swords.

24-7-45

One section proceeded to OKSHITKIN 9733, engaging several targets indicated by Infy. Results could not be checked.

26-7-45

Y Coy. less one P1 under command 6/15 Punjab moved with the Bn. for operations EAST of the Road towards the SITTANG River.

Guns were carried to INBINTHA 0031.

27-7-45—28-7-45

Guns were in action in support of Infy. around ZAHA 0332—YEDWINGON 0333—KYIYO 0433—area 059320.

Several successful shoots were carried out. 120 bodies counted in KYIYO, but impossible to state actual casualties from our guns, but the proportion must have been high. Of one party of 8 Japs. crossing a field 100% casualties were inflicted at 1300^{x} range.

Long carry on one section in three days was 18 miles through extremely difficult going.

9 Pl. with 1/15th Punjab fired about 7000 rounds. Full casualties inflicted could not be ascertained—27 known to be killed by MMGs. Inf. Coy. Comd. congratulated section on excellent support. On one occasion a section of guns with one platoon

of Infy. were subjected to concentrated fire from 3 Jap., MMGs. and rifle fire from a village thought to be unoccupied and towards which our force was moving. The guns immediately went into action, giving close supporting fire, under which the Infy. were able to withdraw, and later put in an attack on the village, scattering the enemy. No. 1 of one gun was killed during this action and one man wounded.

Total bodies counted to the credit of this Coy. was 123.
Prisoners taken ... 2
Own casualties ... 1 killed
1 wounded

In a signal from 6/15 Punjab to FLEWFORCE, extract read—" MG. Jat were excellent and most enthusiastic".

Z Coy.

The coy. was under command 63 Inf. Bde. and Pls. attached to 7/10 Baluch and 1/10 GR. initially with tasks on the perimeter of PENWEGAON (17 Div. H.Q.) and KYAUKTAGA.

22-7-45.

At first light after the attack on the PENWEGON perimeter one of our guns opened up on a party of Japs. killing 19, and according to local reports wounding many more.

A section of 12 Pl. with 7/10 Baluch killed 22, all by MMG. fire, in GANESH 0701. The same section fired two bursts at Japs. with an LMG. killing both and capturing the LMG.

Other guns of this Pl. fired a total of about 12000 rds., into a wooded area around GULAB 0899 in conjuction with Inf. and Arty. Subsequently 176 bodies were counted and PWs. taken. PWs. stated heavy casualties caused by MMG. fire.

23-7-45.

A further action in GANESH village with Arty. fire, resulted in a count of 35 and several mules, from both MMG. and Arty. fire.

On the 29th July orders were received for the Bn. to return to TAIKKYI and revert to 20 Div. Y Coy. were still in action along the SITTANG River at the time, and could not be withdrawn until the following day, but by the beginning of August the complete Bn. was concentrated at TAIKKYI.

The "Break out Battle" had been brought to a most successful conclusion, and although fighting continued, the bulk of the Jap forces had been destroyed. For the minority who evaded our forces, the crossing of the SITTANG River was a perilous business under the eagle eye of our Aircraft, and the weight of our Artillery. Once across the river, they still had to escape large numbers of Burman irregulars who were waiting for them. Accurate figures of those who eventually reached Jap territory out of the total force that made the attempt will probably never be known, but it is certain rhat they represented a minute proportion of the whole. A total of something in the region of 12,000 bodies were counted during the operations, excluding large numbers drowned in the river, and many more whose bodies lay unseen beneath the waters of the paddy fields.

For the first time in the campaign Jap P.Ws. became a very common sight all along the road. Unshaven, wet, and bedraggled, normally without boots and feet dreadfully lacerated; with tatters of what had once been uniform hanging around them, they were a symbol of a defeated Army. A large proportion of them were weak from continued exposure, and lack of food, and suffering from Beri Beri.

Villagers were of great assistance in giving information, and brought in prisoners who had strayed into their villages. There is the story of an officer of a Bde. H.Q. Staff driving along the road, and meeting a small Burmese boy leading a securely bound Jap officer towards the nearest camp.

On another occasion a Jap officer captured by villagers was unable to walk and was duly brought in astride a bullock! Needless to say morale on our side was as high as that of the Japs was low, and there was keen competition amongst all units, and formations to head the list of "enemy killed".

Conditions had not been easy for our troops, and during the ten days of the main battle they were constantly in action, in pouring rain, and after up to their waists in water. It was exhausting work ploughing through fields of water and mud, and the platoons of Y and Z Coys. which accompanied infantry across country, manhandling their MMGs and ammunition deservedly won tribute from the Infantry.

In a special order of the day from the Div. Comd. once it was evident that the battle had begun, all ranks were warned to expect a period of intense strain, and asked to give of their best. As usual the men responded nobly, and were amply rewarded by results.

It was the end of the Jap rule in the greater part of Burma, leaving only those forces in and around MOULMAIN, to be dealt with at a later date.

CHAPTER X

Back in TAIKKYI, the Bn. together for the first time for about seven months, settled down in commortable accomodation to resume training for what was to come. "Spit and polish" and drill received its due share of attention, and the opportunity taken to hold 2nd and 3rd class school examinations. A few miles away was the GYOBU Reservoir, a huge man made lake, which supplied the drinking water for Rangoon 50 miles away, and which was ideal for swimming, and for water regattas. On one occasion organised water sports were held, in which besides ourselves three other units took part. Most of the Bn. attended, and our entries were most successful, walking off with Rs. 80 altogether in prizes, out of a total of Rs. 120. Unfortunately the following day, a senior member of the Rangoon water supply organisation paid a visit to the Reservoir and caught three gurkhas bathing in his precious water, which resulted in the place being put out of bounds, thus ending an agreeable form of recreation. The water expert was highly indignant and finding the three men bathing—what his reactions would have been had he arrived the day before, and seen hundreds of men in the water, can best be left to the imagination! The arrival of an occasional Indian concert party, or a mobile cinema, made a welcome change for the men. Equally popular was the "WASBI" mobile canteen which came down from THARRAWADDY, and opened up shop for a few hours in the lines. The men formed up in queues to purchase strange, but attractive looking things such as toothbrushes—toothpaste—chewing gum, soap, writing materials, and even tins of butter! The girls running it did excellent work, bnt we would have liked to have seen their canteen a little more frequently than we did.

Capt. Wood proceeded on 16 days leave to India in the middle of the month, and this was to be the last we were to see of him. for in view of our impending move further East and the nearness of his Release Group number, it was decided that he would on the expiry of his leave report to the Training Centre and not return to the Bn. We were all very sorry to see him go.

On August 11th the officers gave a party to which a large number of guests had been invited, including several members of the 3/9th Jat Regt. who very kindly brought with them from their camp 25 miles away, six excellent Pipers, who were a real asset and greatly contributed to the success of the evening. Appropriately enough the first whispers of a possible Jap surrender had came through that day, and although nothing was definite, even the possibility gave added joy to the party. In due course the surrender became a "fait accompli,' and it looked as though our fighting was over. W Coy. who had been detailed to accompany 32 Bde. on a special operation "stood down," and there followed a period of uncertainty. Would we stay in Burma? return to India? or move further East to disarm Japs? Lack of knowledge was no deterrent to speculation and gossip. At one period the Bn. was standing by to move to an unknown destination within three days, though nothing came of it and the days lengthened into weeks. Staff tables were prepared for a variety of contingencies, such as; one coy., to move by Air, remainder by sea, leaving all transport in Burma; or the whole Bn., by air, with some vehicles, or without vehicles; the whole Bn. by sea, with vehicles without vehicles; the Bn., to move by air as Infantry, MMGs. by sea with the MT., etc.

Eventually we were told that SAIGON in F. I. C. was our destination, though we were still uncertain how we were to get there. To the officers SAIGON, known only by name for the quality of its pre-war Radio programmes, conjured up pictures of a Paris of the East complete with the traditional gaities and amenities of its original in the West, and the prospect was greeted with enthusiasm. For the men SAIGON was just another place in the world they would be able to say they had visited, but to date its very existence was unheard of. They displayed no surprise at the news, and with a polite "Achha bat sahib,"

dismissed the matter, and waited for the order to move. Had our destination been the North pole, they would have displayed the same fatalistic outlook. Not that it denoted indifference, far from it, for the Indian soldier loves seeing new places, and there was no great wish to return to India. So long as they could get back to their families once a year on leave, they were more than content to remain on service indefinitely enjoying plentiful rations, and increased pay, and accepting risks and discomfort with a fortitude that deserves and gets the admiration of the officers who lead them.

In due course it was decided that the complete Bn. would move by air, but less machine guns which were to proceed by sea with our vehicles. We were loath to be parted from our guns, but it was not anticipated that they would required, and the available air lift was limited. On the 19th Sept. the Bn. M.T. was due to leave for Rangoon to embark. All M.Gs. and connected equipment, plus all heavy kit of the Bn. was loaded, ready to move but a last minute order was received postponing the move until the end of the month.

The departure of our vehicles and equipment in due course left the Bn. in the strange position of having no machine guns to continue training, and for the first time, without a Jeep, or truck of our own. Two three tonners of a G.P. tpt. Coy. were loaned to us for essential maintenance, and instead of M.G. parades the time was given over to increased Drill, musketry, school, and P. T. A considerable amount of time was devoted to games, and the men kept busy during our remaining days in Burma.

An inter platoon Volley Ball, and Basket Ball competition was held during this period, which aroused great enthusiasm, and resulted in a win for Bn. H,Q. at Volley Ball, and a platoon of X Coy. at Basket Ball. The B.Os. entered a team for both events, but were defeated in the first round of Volley Ball, and had to scratch, from the Basket Ball due to casualties after one drawn game.

Y Coy. showed great enterprise by making tug-of-war ropes from a form of the hemp, under the guidance of some of the Indian villagers, and although their efforts were given more to shouting than skill, they had a lot of fun.

Officers and all ranks were delighted to hear that S. M. Mahboob Khan had at last been appointed Hony. Lieut. in a special list of promotions to mark the end of the war. He had been Subedar-Major of the Bn. from the date of its raising, and had over 31 years service. He was in fact the oldest soldier in 20 Div. beating General Gracey our Commander by a few months.

As a small gesture, the officers presented him with a framed copy of a photograph of himself shaking hands with General Auchinleck "C in C" India, taken a short time previously when the General paid a visit to the Division. The back of the photograph was signed by all officers present.

The long awaited order came at last for the Battalion to fly out on the 9th and 10th October. G. P. Transport arrived on the morning of the 8th to lift us to the airstrip at HMWABI, and every thing loaded ready to move. At 1300 hrs. came a message to say "No flying for three days"! The Mess had been stripped, houses, barracks, and furniture handed over, and men, and tpt. were waiting on the road ready to move. It was decided therefore to carry out the move, and if necessary bivouacing near the airstrip for a few days. Luckily however an empty tented camp was found, and the question of going into bivouac did not arise.

Four very pleasant months had been spent in TAIKKYI. The Bn. had been together, in good accommodation, there was little or no sickness; plenty of work, aud plenty of play, adequate rations, and above all good "Pani", all combined to make it the best camp we had known. Rangoon was within easy reach, and opportunities given to the men to visit it, although on account of the very high prices prevailing, interest very quickly dropped. The presence of some Sisters in the nearby hospital was an added attraction as far as BOs concerned, and after a long period in which women had no part it was something of a novelty. Relations with the villagers had been excellent during our stay, and though doubtless we were quickly forgotten, at least the monumental latrines each 12 feet high and 15 yards long with a large Basha built around them will serve to perpetuate our memory for some time to come. While admittedly a strange subject to enthuse about, these necessary habitations were excellent pieces of work, and we were justly

proud of them—even visiting medical officers expressed complete approval, and praise from them, is praise indeed!

Three days were spent in camp at HMWABI until the 13th October when Bn. H.Q., W and X Coys. flew out, followed by Y and Z the next day.

A proportion of the men had flown previously, but to the majority it was a new experience. It was a non stop flight of about six hours, covering over 700 miles, over terrain offering little scope in the event of a forced landing. Weather conditions which had been bad had improved considerably and the trip was completed without incident.

Perhaps the biggest surprise of all was after landing in Saigon when lorries drove out to the airstrip, and instead of the familiar G.P.Tpt., driver, Jap. drivers hoped out, and ran round to salute.

Surprise is understandable when after a long period with one main object, that of killing Japs.—the "Jawans" were suddenly confronted with their enemies moving freely about, driving lorries. guarding buildings and vital points, etc.

For a few days the Bn. remained concentrated in excellent barracks built by the Japs. until W Coy. moved out to take over the wireless station, and petrol dump, under command of 32 Bde. and Y Coy. took up position in the dock area on KANHOI Island under the 3/1st G.R. with fire tasks across the CANAL De DERIVATION. Bn. H.Q. with X and Z Coys. were allotted to 100 Bde. which was preparing to move from SAIGON to take TUDUC—BIEN HUA and TUDUMOT, three towns then in the hands of the Anamities.

The M.T. with our guns had arrived by sea four days after the Bn. flew in, and we were extremely glad to see them, for being without MT. and MMGs. was a great disadvantage, from every point of view.

CHAPTER XI

It would be appropriate here to give an outline of the rather strange position in the country in which we had found ourselves. The application of the term, a "land of Milk and Honey" might well have been applied in normal times, for there was ample

evidence of richness, and fertility. But the ingredients had turned sour, and on our arrival there was no milk, and little honey.

In the province of COCHIN CHINA which includes Saigon, the population is predominately Anamite, a race of Mongolian looking people, who originally migrated from China. As in most Eastern countries there is also a very considerable Chinese element found mainly in the towns, in big business or as shop-keepers and as far as a superficial observer could they controlled a large portion of the wealth of the country.

Then of course there were the French who governed the country, or did mainly on paper at the time of the arrival of the first elements of 20 Div.

As a result of political intrigues and unrest during the war the Anamites encouraged and supported by the Japs. had developed very strong Nationalistic aspirations, and taken advantage of the poison consequent on the sudden collapse of the Japs and undoubtedly with the latters connivance, had formed a so called Government and seized power. The French had very meagre armed forces in the country, and were represented mainly by civilians, and Government Officials. There was necessarily a time lag before British forces could reach the country to disarm the Japs and from the French point of view the situation rapidly deteriorated.

Internal politics however was no concern of ours, and it had been clearly announced that British forces would enter F.I.C. purely and solely for the purpose of disarming, and disposing of the 72,000 Japs in the country. The early elements of the Division were therefore given a friendly reception on arrival.

In spite of a desire to avoid being involved in what was an essential French question, certain steps had to be taken to prevent complete, and utter destruction of communications, and installations essential to the maintenance of our forces. Government machinery had broken down, for the French had no means of enforcing orders, and the Anamite leaders little control over the people even if they had wished for any. Arson, and looting of French property, and buildings began to reach serious proportions, and the lives of large numbers of French men, women and children endangered.

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As a result of the action taken by our forces for their own protection and maintenance of law and order, the revolutionaries saw fit to initiate hostilities, and to make it quite clear that the British were considered as enemies. Indian troops, and officers were ambushed, and posts frequently sniped. In a few instances parties of rebels put in attacks on posts at night supported by MMGs, LMGs and grenades thrown into vehicles from houses caused quite a number of casualties, and this method became so frequent that steps became necessary to combat it by enclosing vehicles with rabit wire.

There was no lack of arms amongst the rebels, which consisted of some MMGs, a number of LMGs, rifles, and plentiful supply of grenades all of which were obtained from Japanese sources. It was known that the ranks of the rebels included Jap deserters who undoubtedly formed the "hard core", and trained the Anamites in minor tactics. In addition to these normal weapons, a form of cross bow with poisoned arrows, spears, and even a form of tear gas were used. A local type of Malotov Cocktail was also encountered. Although therefore the revolutionaries lacked organisation, and training, they had the means, and fully showed their intention of waging war. In the early stages of the conflict Jap troops were employed on guarding certain areas, and in some cases came under command of British Officers for operations. It appeared a strange combination, but it was fitting that they should be used, for without their assistance before our arrival the rebel movement could never have reached the proportions it had.

On the 23rd October X Coy under Capt. B. P. Singh, and Z Coy under Lieut. C. R. Singh with a "tac" Bn. H.Q. moved out with 100 Bde. to secure an area NORTH and N.E. of SAIGON in which Jap forces were to be concentrated after being disarmed. Opposition had been expected but the operation was completed without incident, the Anamite forces clearing out before we arrived. TU DUC was reached the day, BIEN HOA the next, and TU-DUA-MOT on the third day, Z Coy remained at BIEN-HUA with their old friends 14/13 FFR, and X Coy, at TU-DAU-MOT. From these places detachments from each Coy accompanied Armoured and Infantry columns on sweeps of the country side. Brushes with Anamites frequently occurred but

suitable tasks for our guns seldom presented themselves. Tac Bn. reverted to 80 Bde. H.Q. in SAIGON on the 28th.

In early November our existing Mess in Japanese barracks was changed for that of a palatial house in the 80 Bde., Compound. It was one of seven houses belonging to a Chinese Millionaire, beautifully built with all modern conveniences and furnished. Our stay however was short for after only 14 days we were told to move, this time to a smaller, but very nice house recently vacated by General Manaki the local Jap Commander.

No change occurred in our dispositions during November. Major Eales with W Coy. carried out a few disarming ceremonies of small parties of Japs. which on one occasion resulted in 24 swords. Those of the warrant officers were handed to the Coy. H. M.—the officers swords being handed to Jem Umed Singh the senior V.C.O. of the Coy. at the time. The O.C. unit a Major handed over his sword to Major Eales.

Y Coy. area included some large warehouses which were used as a dump for handed in Jap, arms, equipt, etc, and for the guarding of which Y Coy. were responsible—a task very much to their liking ! The Bn. H.Q. Dak Orderly had a grenade thrown at his Jeep one morning when only a few hundred yards from H.Q. Fortunately it failed a explode, and no harm was done.

X and Z Coys remained out at BIEN HUA and TUDAU MOT, putting in a lot of work patrolling, and clearing areas with Infantry. MG. Targets were not often found. although on one occasion when a platoon of Z Coy., were covering the flank of a Gurkha search party Anamites opened fire on our guns from the other side of the river, and received an immediate reply in the form of bursts from 4 MMGs. As the range was less than 300 yards, the rebels paid dearly for their actions, although it was impossible to cross the river to check up results.

On a night during the latter part of November, a Y Coy. routine patrol on HANOI Island, hearing suspicious noises from a nearby house, surrounded it, and found inside a party of ten rebels, two of whom escaped, the remaining eight being taken prisoner.

Grenade throwing, and attemps at Arson continued unabated particularly in the Chinese subrub of Cholon and in 32 Bdes. area NORTH of the Town. Two huge fires were started on the night of the 22nd Nov. At about 8-30 p.m. the quiet of the evening was suddenly disturbed by a number of heavy explosions, combined with the cracking of burning small arms ammunition, which developed into an enormous blaze. Although it was some three miles from the Mess the explosions were so loud that they sounded as though it was but a few hundred yards away. At the time it was taken for granted that Anamites had been at work, but it transpired that a lighted lamp had fallen on to some ammunition in a French store, and blown the whole dump sky high. At the same time another huge fire was started a mile or two to the NORTH, by the Anamites setting fire to a petrol dump, the flames from which lighted the sky until it was bright as day light.

On the 25th November Lt.-Creasy was evacuated to India with his old trouble of a form of Lumbago. This was a particularly had attack, and he suffered considerably.

At this time the Bn. was very short of officers indeed. Capt. Dron the Adjutant who left on 16 days leave from TAIKKYI in Sept. had been admitted to hospital in Bareilly—Creasy who had been officiating for him had in turn reported sick, and as an interim arrangement Major Thompson had to take on Adjutant Lt.-Huntsman had flown to Singapore to see his father a released internee from Malaya, and Lt. Didar Singh to Rangoon for an interview for a Regular commission. Major Davies was some where in India waiting to get to Saigon after his home leave, and Lt. Howick in a similior plight after 16 days leave in India, having already been away over two months. To add to these temporary difficulties Lt.-Col. Johnson had been sanctioned three months leave in India. For nine months the Bn. had been without a 2nd i/c despite frequent applications. One had been posted earlier in the month, but our relief was short lived as the posting was cancelled a few days later.

In early December Lt.-Col. Johnson left SAIGON by air on three months leave in India, leaving Major Thompson in charge of the Bn.

In December more and more French forces began to arrive, and gradually began to take over the country, thus enabling our forces to concentrate on the main task of disarming and concentrating the Japs in the country. The hand over could not be effected at once however, and brushes with Anamites continued particularly in 100 Bde's area which included X and Z Coys.

On one occasion a party of X Coy. from TU-DU-MOT moving in support of the Gurkhas in M.T. were ambushed at short range. On these columns machine guns were always mounted ready for action In the trucks. The opening bust of Anamite fire from an L.M.G. and rifles was heavy and directed at one of the trucks containing a machine gun, and its crew. The latter suffered heavy casualties as they attempted to open fire on the enemy, and when several of them had been knocked out, the remaining Jat sepoy, with great determination, and regardless of personal danger kept his gun in action giving the Infantry covering fire while they debussed, to take on the ambush. This excellent effort gained a well earned M.M.

Coys. took part in a number of Disarming Ceremonies including one of a party of the infamous "KEMPIE TAI."

In spite of the nightly curfew, social life in SAIGON continued at a great pace. There was every opportunity for enjoyment, and even if the standard was not up to that of Pre War times, it was nevertheless high and late nights were frequent. Every Mess in turn held official parties usually including dancing, and in between, a number of unofficial parties were always taking place. The Bn. took its full share and maintained its reputation for generous hospitality. A variety of country wines liquors, etc., some good, and some not so good were available, which were suitable for cocktails and these together with our normal drink ration from the N.A.A.F.I., ensured at least a complete lack of depression at these parties, and no necessity for empty glasses.

Feminine company to those interested was abundant. In addition to a large number of British Nurses, V.A.Ds. etc., SAIGON offered a delectable choice of "young things" only too eager to subscribe to the "Entent Cordial" which even the difficulty of different languages failed to dampen.

The "Cire Sportif," the local French Club threw open its doors and for a very nominal fee offered the usual facilities including tennis and bathing, and it goes without saying that the doors were not thrown open in vain.

Further facilities were afforded in the shape of frequent up to date Films, and E. N. S. A. shows.

CHAPTER XII

By the beginning of February the Division's task was nearing completion, and once more came the question "What next." At first it appeared likely that the Bn., would concentrate in JOHUR State in MALAYA, but that was changed, and about the middle of February 1946, the Bn., embarked at SAIGON to return to India, and the sad news was received that 20 Division would soon cease to exist. The voyage fortunately was completed in calm seas throughout, and on the 3rd of March the Bn., disembarked at BOMBAY, arriving at BAREILLY on the 8th, just over two years since their departure.

A warm welcome awaited the Bn., at the station. Col. ADAMS, and Officers from the Regimental Centre, and the Centre band greeted them, and there were many enthusiastic reunions between the men and their friends and relatives.

Good accommodation had been allotted, and the first few days spent in settling in, cleaning up, etc. Major HOWSE, appointed Bn. 2nd in Command to fill the year old vacancy, had taken over the advanced party, and on arrival of the Bn., had assumed command. Major SQUIER was also in BAREILLY waiting to rejoin after his leave in England. We were also pleased to find Lt. CREASY fit again after his illness, and awaiting our arrival.

At this time nothing was known of the Bn's future, but even then rumours began to fly around that it was to be disbanded. The arrival back from leave of Lt.-Col. JOHNSON coincided with the official intimation that the M.G. Bn. was to complete disbandment by Apr. 15. The previous rumours of this did nothing to soften the blow, and the news hit the whole Bn. hard.

In the few years of its existance the Bn. had developed a spirit of which any regular Bn. could be proud, and it was a very happy family which now faced disbandment. However, necessity

cannot consider personal feelings, and as a Jat M.G. Bn. did not fit into the class organization of the Post War Indian Army, we had to go.

The greatest difficulty was to explain to the men that it was necessary for the Bn. to be disbanded, when they knew full well that we were one of the three Senior M. G. Bns and that comparatively recently converted Bns. were remaining.

A farewell parade was held on March 20th before the men started to go away. This was a most impressive parade, and one which no man of the Bn. wanted to miss. Unfortunately General Gracey our late Divisional Commander was unable to attend—a great pity, as the men and officers would have been delighted to have seen him. The General sent a very nice signal to the Bn. regretting his inability to be present and that a Bn. with such a fine war record should have to be disbanded. Brigadier RODHAM was also unable to get to BAREILLY, and so the M. G. Bn. paraded for the last time without them but undoubtedly left behind them an impression of a fine body of seasoned and well trained men to the large number of spectators who were present.

It was decided that all men in Release Groups up to 29 would leave the service, the reminder to proceed on leave on completion of which they would be absorbed within the Jat. Regt.

The process of disposing of the men as quickly as possible involved a tremendous amount of work for all officers, but once under way proceeded smoothly. The biggest headache was the large amount of stores and equipment to be got rid of, and through normal channels would have been a slow business. By arranging for the bulk of it to be returned to Arsenal by M. T. in one convoy, it was expedited considerably. On arrival at Bombay the Bn. had been landed with a completely new Jeep engine in a crate, which was neither authorised, nor on our charge. Disposing of this single item was about as difficult as the reminder of the stores put together, and only right at the end, were we able to hand it over to a nearby M. T. Unit.

During the period before the men actually started going away every effort was made to entertain them and see that their last days in the Bn. passed pleasantly, including a "Burra Khanna" for all ranks in the lines followed by a conjuring performance, and on

another occasion a very excellent display of Indian Dancing, and comedy, given by the wives and families of Indian members of the I.C.S. living in Bareilly. During the evening every man received a plate of Indian sweetmeats, a bottle of lemonade, and several packets of cigarettes. It was a most excellent evenings entertainment for the men, and the Commissioner of Bareilly and his wife Mr. and Mrs. Browne deserve the highest praise for arranging it.

The Officers though fully occupied by day, found plenty of opportunity for enjoying themselves at night, and on every dance night at the Club, and often on non dance nights, the corner nicknamed "M.G. Bn. Corner" of the main room was the scene of lively parties which invariably continued into the early hours.

"Release" began to take tall of the Officers, Peter Dron being the first to leave for England early in April. Next went Peter Francis beating Barney Davis by a short head. By the time the disbandant was completed Ted Creasy was expecting to leave at any time, though he was heading East to China to take up his old job. All of these had been with the Bn. for most of its existance, and under normal circumstances would have been a great loss. As it was their departure coinciding with the disbandment, came at the best possible time.

Those of us remaining in the service wish them all the best of luck in their civilian careers, and from talk of the reunions in Picaddilly which was a favourite topic in the Mess, that hub of the Empire will hear more of the M.G. Jats.

In the middle of April, Lt.-Col. Johnson received orders posting him to the O.T.S. Bangalore as Chief Instructor. On his departure Major Howse assumed command of the Bn. or perhaps it would be more correct to say that on him devolved the responsibility for disposing of the remnants of what had once been a Bn. A thankless job and one not without a modicum of minor headaches.

On the 15th May 1946 he despatched a signal to G.H.Q. to the effect that the disbandment was complete.

The Day of the M.G. Bn. the JAT Regt. was over, but to those who had the honour to serve in it.

"The Memory Lingers on."

APPENDIX I

Officers and Addresses

Rank	Name	Appt.	Address.
Brigadier	B.R. Godly	C. O.	Bolts Cross House Rotherfield Peppord, Oxon
Lt.-Col.	R.H. Lowe	2 i/c & C.O.	c/o Imperial Bank, Bareilly
,,	S.F. Kauefield Kerney	2 i/c & C.O.	Not Known
,,	H.E. Syer	C. O.	c/o Grindlays Bank, Bombay
,,	E. Johnson	2 i/c & C.O.	c/o J. U. S. Club, Charles Str. London
Major	R.D. Howse	2 i/c	Annesly Theole, Reading, Berkshire
,,	D.W. Squier	Coy. Com.	Harwell Down, Newton St. Eyres Nr. Exeter Devon
,,	B.J.A. Thompson	2 i/c	34, Lea Road, Harpenden, Herts
,,	B. M. Davies	Coy. Comd.	Massabielle Prescat Rd. St., Helens Lancs
,,	P.W. Francis	Coy. Comd.	Priory Cottage Freshwater, I.O.W.
,,	A.D.C. Eales	,, ,,	12 Westbroke, Avenue Margate Kent
,,	W.R. Hough	,, ,,	11 Brooks Str., Lancaster
,,	E.O.M. Skinner	,, ,,	c/o Lloyds Bank, Rawalpindi
,,	Mohd. Khan	,, ,, Q.M.	Jamalpur (Chara) P.O. & Dist. Gujrat
,,	M. Tybyerg	,, ,,	Killed in Action
,,	E. Nield	,, ,,	9 Sunny Bank Rd. Manchester
Capt.	P. W. Dron	Coy. Offr. & Adjt.	59 Amberley Rd., Palmers Green, London
,,	T. W. King	Q. M.	H.Q. No. 1 Corps, Karachi

Rank	Name	Appt.	Address
,,	W.R. Stevens	M.T.O. & Coy. Comd.	Not Known
Lieut	E B.S. Creasy	Adjt and Sig. Offr.	c/o Patons Baldwins, Halifax Yorks
,,	L.H. Kent	Coy. Offr.	c/o H. S. Kent Parliamentary Council White Hall, London
,,	D. A. Banks	M.T.O. & Coy. Offr.	KIAORA Branber Rd., Seaford Sussex
,,	J. Havtorn	Coy. Offr.	Not Known
Capt.	J. B. Joshi	Adjt.	Not Known
,,	F. E. Wood	Coy. Offr.	Redcliffe 14 Chine Eastborne
Major	B. P. Singh	Q. M. Coy Comd.	Haswar Estate, Fyzabad U.P.
Capt.	S. Ranganathan	Coy. Offr.	Santi Villas Satyanarayanapet, Bellary
Lieut.	C. R. Singh	Coy. Offr.	Chandra Giri Post, M.S.M. Rly.
Capt.	R.A. Russell	Coy. Offr.	Groftan, 75, Kingsmead Road Tulse Hall, London S.W. 2
Lieut.	Khema Ram	,, ,,	The Jat Regt. Centre, Bareilly
Capt.	P. K. Noble	M.T.O.	,, ,, ,,
,,	B. M. Bali	Q.M.—Adjt.	,, ,, ,,
Lieut.	R. B. Howick	Coy. Offr.	The Bank Eddesbugh, Dunstable
,,	W.T. Huntsman	,, ,,	2nd Bn. The Jat Regt.
,,	Didar Singh	,, ,,	,, ,,
Capt.	A. C. Bose	M.O.	Not Known
,,	J. K. Karr	M.O.	Raipura District Nohakali, Bengal

APPENDIX II

List of Awards to Men of The Battalion

No.	Rank	Name
	Military Cross	
40762-I.O.	Jamedar	UMED SINGH
34828-I.O.	Subedar	BIR SINGH
	I.D.S.M.	
10424	A/ Havildar	GULSHER
18150	Havildar	PHUL SINGH
	Military Medal	
16545	Sepoy	ALI SHER
11559	C.Q.M.H.	QADIR BUX
10552	Havildar	MOHD. ALAM
25636	Havildar	SARDAR SINGH
16677	L/Naik	CHANDRAM
11526	Havildar	SHOBHACHAND
16935	Naik	DOD RAM
17571	Sepoy	BALDEWA
40400	Sepoy	RANDHIR SINGH
	O.B.I. 1st Class	
3737-10	SUB. MAJ.	MAHBUB KHAN, S.B. O.B.I.
	Mentions in Despatches	
1A-142	Lt.-Col.	H. E. SYER
1A-120	Major	R. H. LOW
1-A1034	Major	D. W. SQUIER
6631	Captain	D. A. BANKS
3737-I.O.	Sub. Major	MAHBOOB KHAN S.B., O.B.I.
11085-I.O.	Subedar	MOHD. AFSAR (TWICE)
20824-I.O.	Subedar	KHUSHAL KHAN (TWICE)
34828-I.O.	Subedar	BIR SINGH
53003-I.O.	Jamadar	SUDHAN SINGH
	Subedar	DES RAM

No.	Rank	Name
10432	Havildar	LAL KHAN
16358	Havildar	SABIR ALI
9539	Havildar	HAFIZ
9947	Havildar	MUBARIK ALI
10783	Havildar	TAJU KHAN
16700	L/Havildar	TAJ MOHD.
17441	Naik	SIRI KISHAN
12323	Naik	MOLU RAM
13910	L/Naik	WILAYAT BEG
18337	L/Naik	NEK MOHD.
16033	L/Naik	BOSTAN KHAN
16662	Sepoy	RATI RAM
1458	M/Cook	GHULAM MOHD.